

CHOICE

Picking the right painkiller

— over 100
compared

'Gene beans':
what the food
labels won't
tell you

TESTS

APS cameras

Espresso machines

Toasters



Editorial



Jane Mackenzie

You may or may not have strong views on genetic engineering, but as a CHOICE subscriber you're probably wide awake to any infringement of your consumer rights. So the news that the food industry is planning to introduce genetically engineered soybeans to the Australian food supply without bothering to tell you on the labels of foods containing them will probably make you see red.

It's not as if the soybeans will only end up in a few non-mainstream food products. Soy beans, flour, lecithin, oil, isolate and concentrate are used in foods ranging from cheese to crackers, ice cream to infant formula — see page 14 for a full list.

Two basic consumer rights are the right to know and the right to choose. The right to know in this case is reinforced by surveys both here and overseas that clearly demonstrate consumers want to know when the process of genetic engineering has been used in food.

So why doesn't the food industry want to tell you? Perhaps it's afraid that once you know you'll exercise that second right — the right to choose. And that you'll choose not to buy products with the 'gene beans' in them.

We think they're barking up the wrong tree. It's quite probable many consumers won't mind genetically engineered ingredients being used in their foods, especially since they won't be able to tell the difference in the end product. But being kept in the dark and treated as if their views are irrelevant is enough to cause plenty of consumer backlash against the food industry and its products.

If you want to put pressure on government and the food industry to label products with a genetically engineered component, turn to page 15 to find out what you can do. It's time to let them know what consumers feel about such high-handed behaviour.

Jane Mackenzie, Editor

Contents

February 1997

Choice Cover story

6 Over-the-counter painkillers

There may seem to be dozens of drugs you can buy for everyday pain treatment, but in fact there are just three or four basic ingredients. You can save yourself money by not paying for some brands' expensive image.

Cover photo: Kent Mears



Choice Regulars

4 Choice Cuts

Heat packs can cause fires; term deposit interest rates; stomach rollers won't help you lose weight; new booklets: buying a car, environmental law.

22 Your Letters

Genetic engineering and food labels; sparkling wine differences.

23 Shopping around

Buying duty-free at Australian international airports.

24 Drivelines

What happens to tyres at the end of their life? What are the alternatives to dumping them in landfill?

26 Computing Choice

Newsgroups on the Internet — someone to talk to ... about anything at all.



Your letters

We welcome the letters you send us — please always include a day-time telephone number so we can contact you quickly if we want to follow your letter up. We're sorry we can't personally answer every letter we receive, but we do use them in our research. Thanks for taking the time to keep in touch.

Write to us at CHOICE, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204.

Phone us on (02) 9577 3399.

Fax us on (02) 9577 3355.

e-mail us at ausconsumer@choice.com.au



▲ Genetically engineered soybeans could find their way into all these foods — but you won't find it on their labels. Page 14.

29 Consumer Bookshelf

46 Recalls and bans

Choice Reports

14 Spilling the 'gene beans'

The food industry is in the process of importing genetically engineered soybeans into the Australian food supply — and they're not planning to tell you on the labels which foods contain affected soy products.

32 Setting up a personal trust fund

What is a trust fund? Why would you set one up? What different types are there? Who can administer it? The answers to these and other questions about setting up a trust fund.

▶ Will APS cameras really "change the way you think about photography"? See page 36.



Choice Tests

16 Espresso machines: expert coffee-making

'Real' coffee at home now tends to mean espresso and cappuccino, not just an old-faithful drip filter. How good are the machines you can buy, and how much do you have to pay to make good espresso at home?

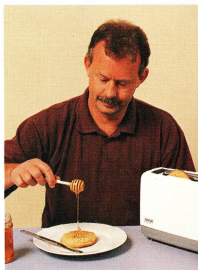


36 APS cameras: Advanced Per Se?

APS simply means 'Advanced Photo System' — but how advanced is it really compared with conventional 35 mm photography? If you're thinking of buying a camera, should you consider one of these?

42 Toasters

You'd think they're a pretty basic product, but around half of the toasters we tested weren't even that good at making toast. And when it came to more complex tasks like crumpets, we'd advise you to stick with your griller.



▶ For most toasters, toasting crumpets isn't as easy as pie.

Coming in the next three issues

Tests: Electric stoves, cooking oils, bank accounts, expensive washing machines, cordless phones, stereo VCRs, breadmakers, 400 L fridges, food processors, column heaters, breakfast cereals.

▶ Which cooking oils are better for your health?

Features: Annual car reliability report, driving lessons, conveyancing, how good is your pharmacy?, fluoride in water, third-party car insurance, mortgages — interest rates vs bells and whistles, soap, tax-driven investments, your heating options, alternative medicine.

We try to bring you tests and reports in the planned month, but sometimes have to move an article because of problems that occur during testing and research, or for lack of space in a particular issue. We apologise if this causes any inconvenience.



Overheated heat packs

If you've been using a wheat-filled heat pack to soothe aching muscles, take care to use it correctly — or you risk having it catch fire.

The packs, which are essentially wheat-filled pillows, are designed to be heated briefly in the microwave, then placed on sore muscles. They're becoming increasingly popular because they're inexpensive, compact, easy to use and mould to the shape of the body.

But they also appear to have been the cause of up to eight house fires around Australia. Because the packs have been associated with safety risks, Senator Bob Woods, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Family Services, has asked the Therapeutic Goods Administration to investigate the current labelling guidelines for the packs, to assess whether tighter regulations are necessary. The packs usually include instructions about usage, but some home-made packs sold at fetes, etc, may not.

Several usage patterns have been identified as possible fire hazards:

- Heating a wheat pack for too



Wheat-filled heat packs are popular for relieving muscle aches and pains — but take care to use them properly.

long, or too many times.

- Heating a pack while it's still warm.
- Covering a pack while it's still hot — possibly by using it as a bed or pocket warmer.

Fires can start when the heat in the pack is prevented from dissipating, or if the wheat loses its natural moisture and so becomes too hot, causing it to catch fire.

So if you own a pack, never cover it while it's hot (or warm, just to be safe), and allow it to completely cool before reheating it.

The packs have a limited lifespan and need to be replaced once they begin to deteriorate. Warning signs include a 'cooked' odour and a smell of burning or charring. Don't throw the pack away until it has cooled down.

HELPFUL BOOKLET

Buying a car on your terms is the title of a helpful 24-page booklet published by the Credit Union Services Corporation.

Its aim is "to help you get the right car at the right price with a minimum of stress". In six sections you'll find advice and checklists on:

- How to select the right type and size of car.
- Safety and environmental aspects you should consider before buying.
- How and where to buy a used car.
- Test driving a car and having it checked before you buy it.
- Different types of insurance and the real costs of owning a car (see also *How much does it cost to own a car?* in CHOICE, December 1996, for more information on this).
- Pros and cons of luxury options and accessories.

The booklet also tells you about dealer warranties in your state and contains useful addresses and phone numbers — for example, where to call for professional inspections or for information about whether a vehicle is unencumbered by debt.

Buying a car on your terms is available free of charge by calling 13 11 28 from anywhere in Australia (for the cost of a local phone call).

Can you help?

Fax machine service

Has your fax machine needed servicing or repair recently? If so, we'd like to hear about your experiences:

- What type of machine do you have (make and model number; with or without phone or answering machine)? How old is it?
- What was the problem?
- How did you find the repairer?
- How much did the service cost?
- Were you happy with the result?

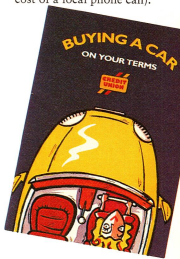
Please send your experiences, good and bad, to Fax machines, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204, or fax to (02) 9577 3377, by February 28, 1997. Thanks for your help.

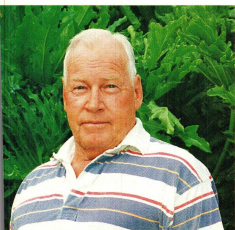
Home insulation

Have you had your house insulated in the past few years? We're planning a report on this topic and want to hear your story:

- Tell us about your house — for example, how big is it and what style? Was it a new or existing house?
- Which parts did you insulate?
- Which insulation material did you use and why?
- Do you think the effort was worth it (for example, have you calculated your yearly savings for heating and cooling)?
- Have you experienced any problems with the installation work or the insulation material?

If you can help, please write to Home insulation, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204, or fax to (02) 9577 3377, by February 28, 1997. Thank you.





Quick action stopped subscriber Don Larsen from taking an interest rate cut of 3% on his term deposit.

Subscriber Don Larsen from Mullumbimby, NSW, told us this would have happened to him if he hadn't been alert when the notification of the term's maturity arrived — with just two days' notice in which to let the bank know he wanted to stay in a 'Super-rate' deposit. The quick action netted him an extra 3% in interest rates.

St George now tells us that since October 27, 1996, term deposits which qualify for a Super rate have been rolled into it automatically — providing there is a deposit fund with exactly matching terms and conditions.

This is a positive step. However, we're still concerned about the ease with which interest rates paid to people rolling over term deposits can be manipulated. As Don Larsen says, "I shall be scrutinising all banking activities very, very carefully." We recommend everyone checks current rates on offer elsewhere before you reinvest with any banking institution.

So Super?

In October last year we criticised the way St George Bank operated its term deposits. The bank has 'Standard' rates for term deposits, which are generally low, and 'Super' rates, for selected terms, which have compared well with what was on offer from other institutions.

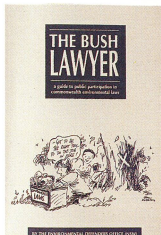
We pointed out a problem if you were tempted by a Super-rate term deposit, and at the end of the term you simply rolled it into another one (as many people do). Unless you contacted St George, you would be dumped into a Standard-rate term deposit — even where a Super rate was available.

Lifting the veil on the law

Are you concerned about environmental issues but confused about who's responsible for them? Under our federal system environmental responsibilities are shared between state and Commonwealth governments and, depending on the issue, it can be difficult to work out which law applies.

To help you find your way through the complexities of the legal system, the Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) has published another of its plain-English guides to environmental laws — *The Bush Lawyer: A guide to public participation in Commonwealth Environmental Law*. The guide:

- Clarifies where the Commonwealth gets its powers.
- Identifies opportunities for public participation and suggests how to complain about or challenge Commonwealth Government decisions.
- Offers advice on when an environmental impact



assessment is required and how it works at the federal level.

■ Reports on Australia's responsibilities under international conventions.

The 96-page paperback book is available from any EDO (there's one in each state and territory) for \$10 (the price will rise to \$15 for the next print run).

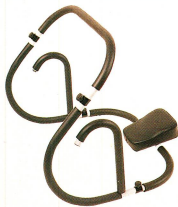
The EDO is a non-profit community legal centre that assists individuals and community groups working to protect the environment.

Correction

Multimedia computers December 1996

In the profile of the IBM Aptiva 76Y31 we pointed out that it has no separate video RAM, and to add 2 Mb would cost around \$50. In fact, this computer does not have the internal connections to add video RAM. Instead you would need to fit a new video card, which would cost around \$150.

Stomach rollers may tone up your muscles, but they won't remove stomach fat caused by being overweight.



Tummy trouble?

A trim, taut tummy in only three minutes a day? This type of claim appears in ads for the latest fitness device — stomach rollers. While one of these products claims to be the 'latest in the fight against a flabby tummy', if you buy one to lose bodyfat you're likely to be disappointed.

The stomach roller was introduced into commercial fitness centres two years ago. The original AB Trainer model by **CYBEX** was designed to assist with abdominal strengthening exercises. But now numerous 'copycat' devices are being heavily marketed and may appeal to weight-conscious people.

Over the last few months we've collected advertisements for products such as the **TREVOR HENDY STOMACH ROLLER, POWER ROLLER, POWER AB** and **AB MAGIC**.

The theory behind these products is that they provide an 'effortless' way to 'trim down your waist'. In fact, by exercising abdominal muscles stomach rollers may improve muscle tone, but they have little role in weight loss and are certainly not effortless.

Stomach exercises won't target your stomach for fat loss, and are in fact generally ineffective for this purpose. You may get tight, strong stomach muscles, but unless you lose bodyfat too they'll be buried under your tummy flab.

Continuous aerobic exercises like walking, cycling or jogging and a general increase in physical activity are best when you're trying to lose weight.

Breaking the rules?

Advertising standards for stomach rollers, and other tone-up devices don't recognise the clever marketing pitches which may imply weight loss to weight-conscious people. CHOICE will be pushing to remove this loophole and ensure all exercise equipment is advertised responsibly.

TEST REPORT

Our raiding party hit the pharmacies and supermarkets and scored over 100 different painkillers — or so it appeared, but the differences lay mainly in the price and the presentation.

IN BRIEF

■ Buy on price: most painkillers of the same type contain exactly the same amount of the active ingredients. Brand loyalty costs you money.

■ You could pay around 75 cents for a packet of 24 paracetamol tablets, as opposed to \$3.35 for essentially the same product with a high-profile brand name. See *Best Buys* on page 10.

■ Paracetamol is gentler to the stomach than aspirin.

■ Ibuprofen, naproxen sodium and mefenamic acid are often recommended for arthritis and period pain, but they're expensive and sometimes a cheaper drug will do what you need — see page 9.

JUDGING FROM THE VARIETY OF PAINKILLERS available today over the counter of your pharmacy, supermarket or corner store, you might be forgiven for thinking there are dozens of different drugs you can take for pain.

The vast variety of over-the-counter painkillers is in fact an illusion.

Out of the more than 100 different products we bought, the large majority featured one of two active ingredients: either aspirin or paracetamol, sometimes combined with a second, usually codeine phosphate, and in the case of paracetamol perhaps a third, doxylamine succinate.

Many painkillers (which are also called analgesics) are exactly the same product — the only differences are the name, brand, manufacturer, specific marketing orientation and sometimes 'filler' ingredients.

For example, all 29 adults' paracetamol-only products we bought contain exactly the same amount of active ingredient, 500 mg. But this comes in forms as varied as tablets, effervescent tablets, tabsules, capsules, caplets or even gelpcaps — and the price ranges from six to 46 cents for each two-tablet dose.

How to choose a painkiller

Making a wise choice of painkiller is, in fact, far easier than it seems, and involves four simple steps.

■ First decide whether you prefer paracetamol, aspirin or another painkiller such as ibuprofen as your major active ingredient. If you're unsure of the pros and cons of each, check them out on pages 8 and 9.

■ Next, decide whether you need a combination product or one with a single ingredient. Combination over-the-counter painkillers usually contain aspirin or paracetamol combined with codeine and sometimes an antihistamine — you'll find some advice on this subject on pages 8 and 9.

■ Third, unless money is no object or you prefer a certain brand for any reason, choose the cheapest you can find, which, for single-ingredient products, is likely to be a 'no-name' brand from a supermarket. See *Best Buys* on page 10 for the cheapest products we found for each of the different painkilling options.



Over-the-counter painkillers

■ Unless you have real trouble swallowing them, go for plain, unglamorous, normal-shaped tablets — they're generally cheaper than capsules, tabsules, caplets or gelpcaps (see photo, right).

Where to buy

Depending on your choice of active ingredient(s) and pack size, you may have to go to a pharmacy rather than a supermarket to buy. Over-the-counter painkillers are 'scheduled' just like other drugs, and they fall into three categories.

■ The small packs (under 25) of paracetamol and aspirin are freely available anywhere, as they are classified as 'exempt'.

■ Some over-the-counter painkillers are 'pharmacy-only medicine', scheduled as S2. In this group are the larger pack sizes of paracetamol and aspirin,



counter killers

the products which combine either of the former with codeine, children's products, ibuprofen and smaller packs of mefenamic acid and naproxen sodium for period pain. In small remote country towns where access to a pharmacy is a problem, these may be sold in grocery stores which hold a poisons licence.

■ Finally there is the S3 group, which can also only be sold in pharmacies and must be dispensed by the pharmacist. Into this category fall the triple-ingredient compounds (mainly paracetamol, codeine and doxylamine succinate), and larger packs of naproxen sodium and mefenamic acid.

How do painkillers work?

Chemical substances called prostaglandins are released by the body's cells in response to certain stimuli such as injury. Some are involved in caus-

ing pain, while others act as part of the immune response, producing inflammation (localised redness, pain and swelling) and fever.

Over-the-counter painkillers are thought to control pain in several different ways, though mainly by reducing the production of prostaglandins. Many also control fever (anti-pyretics), and some control inflammation (anti-inflammatories).

NSAIDs and paracetamol

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as **aspirin**, **ibuprofen**, **mefenamic acid** and **naproxen** are not only painkillers but anti-inflammatory as well. They act in the brain and also work in the painful area to reduce pain and inflammation. This ability to work locally explains why NSAIDs are particularly effective against arthritis and period pain.

Aspirin and other NSAIDs all help control fever too, but these days **paracetamol** seems increasingly to be the drug of choice when you have a high temperature. Paracetamol is thought to act by reducing the production of prostaglandins in the brain only — it doesn't work at the site of the pain. While it's an effective painkiller for arthritis, for example, it doesn't reduce inflammation. And it won't reduce production of prostaglandins in the uterus either (which cause the spasms associated with period pain).

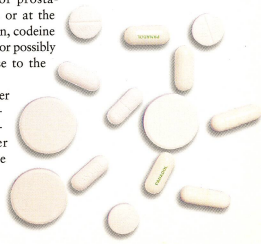
Narcotic painkillers and antihistamines

Paracetamol, aspirin and other NSAIDs all fall into the category of 'non-narcotic' painkillers. Narcotic analgesics (such as heroin, morphine and codeine) are derived from opium, a powerful addictive drug, and are consequently not sold over-the-counter, with only one exception.

Codeine is available over-the-counter in Australia only in low doses and in combination with other painkillers, because it has the least potential for addiction of the narcotic painkillers. Rather than reducing the production of prostaglandins either in the brain or at the site of injury or inflammation, codeine is thought to work by dulling or possibly altering the brain's response to the pain message.

Antihistamines are another type of drug used in combination with the active ingredients in over-the-counter painkillers. The antihistamine in a number of the painkillers we bought is **doxylamine**, which is also a sedative.

'Tabsubles' and 'caplets' are one and the same, an elongated tablet designed to slip more easily down your throat. For this you'll often pay a premium: for example, PANADOL 'caplets' are more expensive than ordinary PANADOL tablets. 'Gelcaps' are smaller and gelatine-coated so they're even easier to swallow, and they'll cost you even more — around \$1.20 more for PANADOL than the plain tablets.



The active ingredients



ASPIRIN

Aspirin is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). While it's still used to treat pain, fever and inflammation, its tendency to irritate the stomach and cause bleeding, heartburn or nausea in significant numbers of people has led to paracetamol, which doesn't irritate the stomach, becoming more popular. Elderly people should use aspirin with caution, as they are more vulnerable to its side effects.

Not advised for:

- Babies and children under 15, particularly with a fever or a virus. This is because of aspirin's link with Reye's syndrome, a rare disease which can cause delirium and coma.
- People with gastrointestinal problems, such as an ulcer or irritable bowel syndrome, or with liver or kidney disease.
- Anyone with asthma (it can bring on an attack in some cases).
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- Anyone about to undergo surgery, or with a bleeding disorder, or already taking anti-coagulant drugs (because aspirin itself acts as an anti-coagulant).
- People already taking other drugs such as anti-inflammatories.
- It's best not to drink alcohol when taking aspirin.

What's on the market

In our shopping expedition we bought 25 different aspirin-only products. We also found eight products which offer aspirin in combination with 8-10 mg of codeine (see the table on pages 12 and 13 for details of all the painkillers we found). A number of both types of aspirin product are soluble (this should give faster pain relief as the painkiller is absorbed more quickly).

The aspirin-only products vary in terms of their amount of active ingredient: a standard tablet has 300 mg, but you can get up as high as 650 mg in **BEX** powders or **ECOTRIN** tablets. The combination products offer the same range in aspirin content. So it's worth reading the front of the packet carefully so that you don't take more active ingredient than you really need, as the usual adult dose is two 300 mg tablets every four hours.



PARACETAMOL

Paracetamol is the painkiller recommended for children and babies over one month old, for pregnant women and for anyone whose stomach is sensitive to NSAIDs. It has also been proven highly effective in managing the pain of arthritis (although not the inflammation). However, it's by no means benign and like all drugs must be used carefully.

Not advised for:

- People with severe liver or kidney disease.

The risks of poisoning

The major risk with paracetamol is poisoning through overdose, whether accidental or intentional. Overdose causes jaundice, liver failure and death. What constitutes an overdose can vary greatly from person to person, but liver damage has been known to occur after a single dose of 14 regular tablets. Overdosing can also be cumulative.

Anyone who has overdosed needs to get treatment within 12 hours to have the best possible chance of recovery. To complicate matters, there may be no symptoms at all with paracetamol poisoning for at least the first 24 hours — and the liver damage is usually irreversible after 10-12 hours, particularly in adults. This raises some difficult questions about the easy availability of paracetamol at the retail level, and its accessibility within the home environment.

Judith Kirby, Pharmacist-in-charge at the NSW Poisons Information Centre, says paracetamol tops the list of substances which generate the most calls at the Sydney centre (which takes calls nationwide). However, she believes paracetamol's over-the-counter status shouldn't be revoked because it's important to have a readily available over-the-counter treatment for fever in children.

What's on the market

We found a grand total of 56 over-the-counter painkilling products with paracetamol as the major active ingredient, plus 20 children's preparations. Some (for adults only) are compound analgesics, coupling paracetamol with codeine, but there is also a trend towards products combining paracetamol, codeine and doxylamine.



CODEINE

Codeine is the mildest of the narcotic painkillers, but even so has the potential to be addictive. Unless you know from experience that a normal over-the-counter dose doesn't make you drowsy or lose concentration, don't use machinery or drive a vehicle while you're taking it. It's also better not to combine it with alcohol.

Check with your doctor before taking products containing codeine if you have an underactive thyroid, liver or lung disease, or an enlarged prostate. Although you can take it safely during pregnancy, use it only sparingly for children and when you're breastfeeding. Elderly people should use a reduced dose, because they're more vulnerable to the side effects. Codeine can also cause nausea and constipation.

Do you really gain added painkilling effect by using preparations combining codeine with aspirin or paracetamol? The answer seems to be 'probably', if you take sufficient codeine.

It seems that doses of at least 15 mg of codeine (or, even more likely, 25-30 mg) do result in significantly more painkilling effect than aspirin or paracetamol alone — so a dose of two combination tablets (16 to 20 mg in total) would probably be effective for many people.

What's on the market

We found 35 products containing up to 10 mg of codeine, with either aspirin or paracetamol. Those which also contain the antihistamine doxylamine tend to cost the most.



DOXYLAMINE

In the painkillers we bought, doxylamine succinate is the most common third ingredient, used in combination with paracetamol and codeine (not aspirin). It's added to painkillers to relax muscles and tension, and is mainly found in products marketed at sufferers of pain conditions such as tension headaches, migraine and dental pain.

Doxylamine is a sedating antihistamine, and should be avoided if you're operating machinery, driving a vehicle or drinking alcohol. It's generally considered safe in pregnancy and breastfeeding, but should be used with caution by people with liver, heart or lung disease, glaucoma, enlarged prostate, or a severe peptic ulcer. It's not recommended for children under 12.

What's on the market

Of the combination analgesics we bought, 11 contain doxylamine. They're generally more expensive than other over-the-counter painkillers: the ones we found ranged from 24 cents per tablet (**RAPIDEINE Plus**) to 41 cents (**FIORINAL Dental**).



IBUPROFEN, MEFENAMIC ACID AND NAPROXEN SODIUM

Ibuprofen, mefenamic acid and naproxen sodium are the other NSAIDs marketed in Australia as over-the-counter painkillers.

Although these combat pain and fever just like aspirin, they are more frequently recommended for use with arthritic conditions, sprains and strains and period pain, as this is where they seem to be most effective.

They have all been around for some time as prescription drugs, but have gradually acquired over-the-counter status: ibuprofen, for example, was launched over-the-counter in Australia under the brand name **NUROFEN** in 1989.

To be avoided by:

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- People with asthma.
- Anyone with a history of peptic ulcer, irritable bowel syndrome or other gut disorders.
- Anyone due for surgery, or with anaemia or a bleeding disorder.
- People with epilepsy, heart failure, kidney disease, severe infection or psychiatric disturbances.
- They're not recommended for treating pain and fever in children.

Elderly people are the heaviest users of NSAIDs, and may be more vulnerable to the side effects.

What's on the market

We found just three ibuprofen products, two naproxen sodium and one mefenamic acid — see the table for details.

None of them is cheap, although the ibuprofen products are the least costly. They're probably only worth buying if you're really after their local action properties for period pain or arthritis, for instance. For a headache, stick to paracetamol or aspirin unless you find them ineffective.

BEST BUYS



■ The pharmaceutical industry is extremely competitive — while you'll find many different brands and manufacturer names, in fact you're buying from a very limited number of players.

For example, the profit from any product from Sterling Health, Sanofi Winthrop or Smith Kline & French all now goes to SmithKline Beecham, and products labelled Fawns & McAllian, Wellcome or Parke Davis-Wellcome all belong to Warner Lambert Consumer Health Care.

■ Ibuprofen is a good example of the competition. In a 200 mg dose it doesn't have to be dispensed by a pharmacist any more, which has led to massive advertising campaigns for ACTIPROFEN, NUROFEN and ACT-3. Boots and Whitehall, manufacturers of NUROFEN and ACT-3 respectively, are said to be trying to push sales of ibuprofen to rival those of paracetamol. Time will tell, but with prices like 19, 20 and 24 cents per tablet respectively versus the cheapest paracetamol we found at three cents per tablet, we think it will be uphill work.

With over-the-counter painkillers, a **Best Buy** needs to consider not only price, but also the appropriateness and effectiveness of a particular drug for a specific type of pain.

An Australian study has found which over-the-counter painkiller pharmacists recommended for particular conditions:

■ For a **simple headache**, 84% recommended a paracetamol-based product — presumably because it's gentler to the stomach. Our **Best Buy** in that category would be a 'no name' product: you can get **BI-LO**, **HOME BRAND** (Woolworths/Safeway), **NO FRILLS** (Franklins), **NO NAME** (Jewel) or **SAVINGS** (Coles Myer)

paracetamol for around three cents a tablet in a packet of 24.

So buying one of these brands could save you around \$2.60 compared with a pack of **PANADOL** tablets. Buying in bulk can also save you money — for example, you can get 100 **TYLENOL** tablets for around \$3, and several other brands are also available in 50s or 100s.

■ For **tension or migraine headache and dental pain** over two thirds of pharmacists recommended a paracetamol and codeine compound with antihistamine. Our **Best Buy** would be **RAPIDEINE Plus**, which costs around 24 cents per tablet for a pack of 24 — a saving of around 12 cents a tablet over **FIORINAL**, for example, yet it contains slightly more codeine.



Other pharmacists recommended paracetamol and codeine only, in which case **CODALGIN**, **THRIFT CHEMISTS Forte Pain**

Tablets, **PANAMAX Co** and **AMCAL Paralieve-Co** would be the cheapest at around 13 cents per tablet for 50 tablets — again, you could save 12 cents on each tablet compared with **CODRAL**, the most expensive equivalent.

The cheapest aspirin/codeine mix was **SOLCODE**, at 12 cents a tablet.

■ For **period pain**, almost all the pharmacists

in the study recommended an NSAID, preferably naproxen sodium. We only bought two of these (**NAPROGESIC** and **SYNFLEX**) and neither was cheap at 68 or 70 cents a tablet.

An alternative NSAID is ibuprofen, and **ACTIPROFEN** and **NUROFEN** are the cheapest at around 19 and 20 cents a tablet respectively for 24 tablets.

■ For **sprains and strains**, ibuprofen was recommended by 80% (see *Period pain* above).

■ For **arthritis**, an NSAID was the drug of choice, with ibuprofen preferred. However, if you don't have much inflammation and just suffer from pain, it's far cheaper and probably just as effective to use paracetamol or aspirin.

See *Simple headache*, above left, for the paracetamol **Best buys**; for aspirin, again the 'no-name' products are the cheapest, with **HOME BRAND** (Woolworths/Safeway), **NO FRILLS** (Franklins) and **SAVINGS Aspirin** (Coles Myer) at about three cents a tablet in a 24-tablet pack. That's a quarter the price of the most expensive brand. Again, buying in bulk gives you a good deal too: you can get 100 tablets for about \$3 with **SPREN Aspirin** and **SOLPRIN**.

It's worth noting that the study found pharmacists to be susceptible to advertising. They primarily made their recommendations on the strength of product characteristics, but advertising proved the second-greatest influence.



Popular paracetamol

In 1995 paracetamol products accounted for 56% of total over-the-counter painkiller sales; products which contain paracetamol and another active ingredient 20%; and aspirin products only 17%. The latter shows a major change in the market, as back in 1987 aspirin-based products represented 45% of sales.

For sales in supermarkets and small shops up to April 1996, **PANADOL** remained the out-and-out winner by a mile with 60% of market share. **ASPRO** takes second place but a long way behind (11.3%), followed by the **HERRON** range (10.2%), **DISPRIN** (7.4%) and house brands (3.9%). Such a low figure for house brands, when you consider how much cheaper they are, must surely be a tribute to the power of marketing and advertising.

The picture was similar in pharmacies in 1995, except that **PANADOL** held 30% market share and **PANADEINE** (the compound product with codeine that can only be sold in pharmacies) nearly 20%. **MERSYNOL** had 11.3%, followed by **DYMADON** and **NUROFEN**.

The bottom line for Australian consumers is that your over-the-counter painkiller dollar is worth a lot to manufacturers, and huge efforts are made to secure it. So consider carefully just how much of it you're willing to hand over, and why you should pay more for essentially the same product.

Children's products

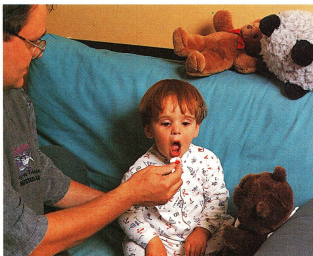
Paracetamol is the painkiller recommended for children, and it comes in the form of suspensions, drops, elixir, syrup and chewable or effervescent tablets. Children over 12 years of age usually qualify as 'adults' as far as painkillers are concerned, unless specifically indicated otherwise on the product.

- **Drops** are usually recommended for babies and very young children, because you can measure the dose much more precisely, and this is crucial. It's also probably one of the easiest ways to give medicine to very young children.
- **Suspensions** are thicker because the active ingredient is 'held' in the liquid by a suspending agent — they therefore must always be well shaken.
- **Elixirs and syrups** are thinner liquid products with the active ingredient dissolved and an agent added to mask its bitter taste.
- **Chewable and effervescent tablets** are also available.

What to buy

It's worth shopping around a bit — as with adult products, there are price differences. For example, SOUL PATTINSON

Paracetamol For Children Elixir for one month to 12 years costs around 50 cents a dose for older children, whereas **PANADOL's** equivalent product costs 83 cents and **TEMPRA's** 93 cents.



Paracetamol is available as syrups, drops, suspensions and chewable tablets, to make it easier to give to children.

Advice on using paracetamol for children, from the NSW Poisons Information Centre:

- When you've used the paracetamol, put it away immediately. At night don't stumble off to bed exhausted, leaving it by the child's bedside.
- Make sure the child-resistant top is on properly and keep in mind they're child-resistant, not child-proof.
- Check labels, as paracetamol can appear as an ingredient in a variety of household medications (such as decongestants and cough medicines), and you don't want to double up.

Over-the-counter painkillers for children

Product name (in order of cost per maximum dose)	Type	Manufacturer / distributor	Pack size (mL)	Dose	mg of paracetamol per dose	Doses per pack	Cost per dose (cents)
BABIES' PRODUCTS (based on the maximum recommended single dose for a one-year-old)							
SOUL PATTINSON Paracetamol for Children (1 month to 12 years)	Elixir	Soul Pattinson	200	4 mL	96	50	13
AMCAL Paralieve Elixir (1 month to 12 years)	Elixir	Allied Master Chemists	100	4 mL	96	25	19
DYMADON (4 months to 12 years)	Suspension	Warner Lambert	100	5 mL	120	20	25
PANADOL Children Colourfree 1 month to 12 years	Suspension	SmithKline Beecham	100	5 mL	120	20	27
PANADOL Infants Colourfree 1 month to 4 years	Drops	SmithKline Beecham	20	1.2 mL	120	16	27
DYMADON 1 to 4 years (colour-free)	Suspension	Warner Lambert	100	5 mL	120	20	28
DYMADON 2 months to 2 years (colour-free)	Drops	Warner Lambert	50	2.5 mL	125	20	28
PANADOL Children 1 month to 12 years	Elixir	SmithKline Beecham	100	5 mL	120	20	28
PANADOL Infants Original 1 month to 4 years	Drops	SmithKline Beecham	20	1.2 mL	120	16	30
TEMPRA 2 Syrup (1 month to 12 years)	Syrup	Mead Johnson	200	5 mL	120	40	31
TEMPRA 1 Drops (1 month to 4 years)	Drops	Mead Johnson	20	1.2 mL	120	16	33
CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS (based on the maximum recommended single dose for an eight-year-old)							
PANADOL 7+ years Colourfree Clear	Effervescent tablets	SmithKline Beecham	12 (tablets)	1.5 tablets	375	8	37
DYMADON 5 years plus (colour-free)	Suspension	Warner Lambert	200	6.5 mL	325	30	44
SOUL PATTINSON Paracetamol for Children (1 month to 12 years)	Elixir	Soul Pattinson	200	15 mL	360	13	50
PANADOL 4+ years	Elixir	SmithKline Beecham	100	7.5 mL	360	13	51
DYMADON (4 months to 12 years)	Suspension	Warner Lambert	100	15 mL	360	6	56
FAULDING Chewable Paracetamol (4 to 12 years)	Chewable tablets	Faulding Consumer	20 (tablets)	3 tablets	360	6	60
PANADOL 4+ years Colourfree	Suspension	SmithKline Beecham	100	7.5 mL	360	13	60
DYMADON 4 years plus	Suspension	Warner Lambert	100	7.5 mL	360	13	62
AMCAL Paralieve Elixir (1 month to 12 years)	Elixir	Allied Master Chemists	100	15 mL	360	6	71
PANADOL Children's Chewable	Chewable tablets	SmithKline Beecham	24 (tablets)	3 tablets	360	8	71
PANADOL Children Colourfree 1 month to 12 years	Suspension	SmithKline Beecham	100	15 mL	360	6	81
PANADOL Children (1 month to 12 years)	Elixir	SmithKline Beecham	100	15 mL	360	6	83
TEMPRA Syrup 2 to 8 years	Syrup	Mead Johnson	100	15 mL	360	6	86
TYLENOL Children's Chewable Paracetamol	Chewable tablets	Johnson & Johnson	24 (tablets)	4 tablets	320	6	90
TEMPRA 2 Syrup (1 month to 12 years)	Syrup	Mead Johnson	200	15 mL	360	13	93

OVER-THE-COUNTER PAINKILLERS

Product name (in order of cost per maximum dose, within groups)	Type	Manufacturer / distributor	Active ingredients per tablet (mg)	Soluble / dispersible?	No. in pack*	Price per tablet (cents)	Max. single dose**	Cost per max. dose (cents)
ASPIRIN								
HOME BRAND Soluble Aspirin	Tablets	Woolworths / Safeway	Aspirin 300	✓	24	3	3	9
NO FRILLS Aspirin	Tablets	Franklins	Aspirin 300		24	3	3	9
SAVINGS Aspirin	Tablets	Coles Myer Supermarkets	Aspirin 300		24	3	3	9
SOLPRIN	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 300	✓	100	3	3	9
SPREN Aspirin	Tablets	Sigma	Aspirin 300		100	3	3	9
AMCAL Aspirin	Tablets	Allied Master Chemists	Aspirin 300		100	4	3	12
BLACK & GOLD Aspirin	Tablets	Amalgamated Aust. Wholesalers (A)	Aspirin 300		24	4	3	12
ECOTRIN	Tablets	SmithKline Beecham	Aspirin 650		100	7	2	14
FAULDING Aspirin, Soluble	Tablets	Faulding	Aspirin 300	✓	24	9	2	18
SOUL PATTINSON Aspirin	Tablets	Soul Pattinson	Aspirin 300		24	9	2	18
SOUL PATTINSON Dispersible Aspirin	Tablets	Soul Pattinson	Aspirin 300	✓	24	10	2	20
FAULDING Aspirin	Tablets	Faulding	Aspirin 300		96	7	3	21
BAYER Aspirin	Tablets	Bayer	Aspirin 300		20	12	2	24
HOME BRAND Clear Aspirin	Tablets	Woolworths / Safeway	Aspirin 300	Effervescent	20	8	3	24
NO FRILLS Clear Aspirin	Tablets	Franklins	Aspirin 300	Effervescent	20	8	3	24
BEX	Powders	Roche	Aspirin 650		12	28	1	28
VINCENT'S Powders	Powders	Roche	Aspirin 500		12	29	1	29
FARMLAND Clear Aspirin	Tablets	Coles Myer Supermarkets	Aspirin 300	Effervescent	20	11	3	33
ASPRO	Tablets	Roche	Aspirin 300		20	13	3	39
DISPRIN Regular	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 300	✓	24	13	3	39
DISPRIN Capsules	Capsules	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 300		20	14	3	42
DISPRIN Direct	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 300	Dissolve in mouth	24	14	3	42
ASPRO	Capsules	Roche	Aspirin 300		20	15	3	45
DISPRIN Extra Strength	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 500	✓	16	23	2	46
ASPRO Clear	Tablets	Roche	Aspirin 300	Effervescent	20	16	3	48
ASPIRIN AND CODEINE								
SOLCODE	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 500, codeine phosphate 8	✓	50	12	2	24
ASPALGIN	Tablets	Fawns & McAllan	Aspirin 300, codeine phosphate 8	✓	50	15	2	30
DECRIN	Powders	Roche	Aspirin 650, codeine phosphate 10		12	30	1	30
CODOX	Tablets	Boots	Aspirin 300, dihydrocodeine tartrate 7.5	✓	24	21	2	42
CODIS	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 500, codeine phosphate 8	✓	24	22	2	44
DISPRIN Forte	Tablets	Reckitt & Colman	Aspirin 500, codeine phosphate 9.5	✓	24	22	2	44
VEGANIN	Tablets	Warner Lambert	Aspirin 325, codeine phosphate 8		20	28	2	56
CODIPHEN	Tablets	Pfizer	Aspirin 250, codeine phosphate 8		24	34	2	68
PARACETAMOL								
BI-LO Paracetamol	Tablets	Bi-Lo	Paracetamol 500		24	3	2	6
HOME BRAND Paracetamol	Tablets	Woolworths / Safeway	Paracetamol 500		24	3	2	6
NO FRILLS Paracetamol	Tablets	Franklins	Paracetamol 500		24	3	2	6
NO NAME Paracetamol	Tablets	Jewel Food Stores	Paracetamol 500		24	3	2	6
SAVINGS Paracetamol	Tablets	Coles Myer Supermarkets	Paracetamol 500		24	3	2	6
TYLENOL	Tablets (B)	Johnson & Johnson	Paracetamol 500		100	3	2	6
DYMADON P	Tablets	Warner Lambert	Paracetamol 500		100	5	2	10
PARALGIN	Tablets	Fawns & McAllan	Paracetamol 500		100	5	2	10
PAYLESS Paracetamol	Tablets	Payless Supermarkets (C)	Paracetamol 500		20	5	2	10
PANAMAX	Tablets	Sanofi Winthrop	Paracetamol 500		50	6	2	12
FARMLAND Paracetamol	Tablets	Coles Myer Supermarkets	Paracetamol 500		24	7	2	14
HERRON Paracetamol	Tablets	Herron Pharmaceuticals	Paracetamol 500		24	8	2	16
HERRON Paracetamol	Tablets	Herron Pharmaceuticals	Paracetamol 500		12	9	2	18
SETAMOL 500	Tablets (B)	Reckitt & Colman	Paracetamol 500		24	9	2	18
SOUL PATTINSON Paracetamol	Tablets	Soul Pattinson	Paracetamol 500		50	9	2	18
HERRON Paracetamol	Capsules	Herron Pharmaceuticals	Paracetamol 500		24	10	2	20
AMCAL Paracetamol	Tablets	Allied Master Chemists	Paracetamol 500		20	12	2	24
CHEMADOL	Tablets	ChemMart	Paracetamol 500		24	12	2	24
DYMADON	Tablets	Warner Lambert	Paracetamol 500		24	12	2	24

Product name (in order of cost per maximum dose, within groups)	Type	Manufacturer / distributor	Active ingredients per tablet (mg)	Soluble / dispersible?	No. in pack*	Price per tablet (cents)	Max. single dose**	Cost per max. dose (cents)
PARACETAMOL, continued								
DYMADON	Tablets (8)	Warner Lambert	Paracetamol 500		24	12	2	24
FAULDING Paracetamol	Tablets	Faulding	Paracetamol 500		24	12	2	24
TYLENOL	Tablets	Johnson & Johnson	Paracetamol 500		24	12	2	24
PANADOL	Tablets	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500		24	14	2	28
PANADOL	Caplets	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500		24	15	2	30
PANADOL	Capsules	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500		24	18	2	36
FAULDING Chewable paracetamol	Tablets	Faulding	Paracetamol 500		20	19	2	38
PANADOL Clear	Tablets	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500	Effervescent	20	19	2	38
PANADOL	Gelcaps	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500		24	19	2	38
TYLENOL	Gelcaps	Johnson & Johnson	Paracetamol 500		20	23	2	46
PARACETAMOL AND OTHER ACTIVE INGREDIENTS								
AMCAL Paralieve-Co	Tablets	Allied Master Chemists	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		50	13	2	26
CODALGIN	Tablets	Fawns & McAllan	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		50	13	2	26
THRIFT Forte Pain Tablets	Tablets	Thrift Chemists	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 10		50	13	2	26
PANAMAX CO	Tablets	Sanofi Winthrop	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		50	13	2	26
HEALTHCARE Pain Tablets	Tablets	Healthcare Chemists	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 10		50	14	2	28
CODAPANE	Tablets	Alphapharm	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	15	2	30
PAIN TABLETS	Tablets	Stephen Hunter	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 10		48	16	2	32
RAPIDEINE	Tablets	Soul Pattinson	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	17	2	34
CHEMADEINE	Tablets	ChemMart	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	18	2	36
AMCAL Paralieve-Co	Capsules	Allied Master Chemists	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	19	2	38
PANAIDEINE	Tablets	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	19	2	38
PANAIDEINE	Caplets	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	21	2	42
DYMADON CO	Tablets	Warner Lambert	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		20	24	2	48
PANAIDEINE	Capsules	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		24	24	2	48
RAPIDEINE PLUS	Tablets	Soul Pattinson	Paracetamol 450, codeine phosphate 9.75, doxylamine succinate 5		24	24	2	48
CODRAL	Tablets	Warner Lambert	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8		20	25	2	50
PANAIDEINE PLUS	Capsules	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8, doxylamine succinate 5		24	26	2	52
CHEMADEINE PLUS	Tablets	ChemMart	Paracetamol 450, codeine phosphate 9.75, doxylamine succinate 5		24	28	2	56
DOLASED Analgesic-Relaxant	Tablets	Stephen Hunter	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 10, doxylamine succinate 5.1		20	28	2	56
THRIFT Relaxant Pain Tablets	Tablets	Thrift Chemists	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 10, doxylamine succinate 5.1		20	30	2	60
AMCAL Paralieve Plus	Tablets	Allied Master Chemists	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 9.6, doxylamine succinate 5.1		20	31	2	62
FIORINAL	Tablets	Sandoz	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8, doxylamine succinate 5		24	31	2	62
PANALGESIC	Capsules	Sanofi Winthrop	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8, doxylamine succinate 5		24	31	2	62
MERSYNDOL	Tablets	Marion Merrell Dow	Paracetamol 450, codeine phosphate 9.75, doxylamine succinate 5		20	32	2	64
PANAIDEINE Clear	Tablets	SmithKline Beecham	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8	Effervescent	20	32	2	64
FIORINAL	Capsules	Sandoz	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 8, doxylamine succinate 5		20	36	2	72
FIORINAL Dental	Capsules	Sandoz	Paracetamol 500, codeine phosphate 10, doxylamine succinate 2		20	41	2	82
IBUPROFEN								
ACTIPROFEN	Caplets	SmithKline Beecham	Ibuprofen 200		24	19	2	38
NUROFEN	Tablets	Boots	Ibuprofen 200		24	20	2	40
ACT-3	Capsules	Whitehall	Ibuprofen 200		20	24	2	48
NAPROXEN SODIUM								
SYNFLEX	Tablets	Syntex	Naproxen sodium 275		12	68	2	\$1.36
NAPROGESIC	Tablets	Syntex	Naproxen sodium 275		12	70	2	\$1.40
MEFENAMIC ACID								
PONSTAN	Capsules	Warner Lambert	Mefenamic acid 250		20	45	2	90

* Buying in bulk — 50s or 100s — is often cheaper. We didn't buy every pack size of every brand name, so look out for larger packs if you prefer a particular brand.
** As suggested on the pack.

(A) You'll find Black & Gold in many smaller supermarket chains.

(B) Capsule-shaped tablet.

(C) Payless is being taken over by Davids Ltd and may soon have a different name.

Spilling the 'gene beans'

The food industry is currently in the process of importing genetically engineered soybeans into the Australian food supply — and on a 'what you don't know won't hurt you' basis.

AT THIS VERY MOMENT, A GENETICALLY engineered soybean is on its way into your food. You could end up eating the 'gene bean' in everything from chocolate to crisps, margarine to mayonnaise and biscuits to bread. What's more, you'll have no way of knowing it's there.

At the time of writing, neither Monsanto (the 'gene bean' developer) nor governments, manufacturers and retailers are willing to assume any responsibility for telling you about this product. This is despite the fact that surveys carried out both in Australia and overseas have shown consumers want to know when genetic engineering has been used.

At the moment Australian law doesn't make manufacturers tell you on the label when a food has been genetically engineered. CHOICE convinced the Federal Government months ago that they should label foods such as those containing the soybean, and they're working on it, but it's still a good way off.

What is the 'gene bean'?

Monsanto's ROUNDUP READY SOYBEAN has been developed by adding genetic material from a virus, a bacterium and a petunia plant.

This makes the soybean plant resistant to the company's own best-selling weedkiller, Roundup, which can then be sprayed on the soybean crop without killing it — only the weeds will be affected.

What has the government done about the 'gene bean'?

The Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee (GMAC), the body responsible for the scientific assessment of genetically modified organisms in Australia, has assessed the 'gene bean' for environmental safety and says there is no cause for concern. Regulatory authorities overseas say it's equivalent in every way to a regular soybean, but it's not been assessed as a food in Australia. However, regular soybeans are *not* genetically engineered and they're *not* resistant to the herbicide Roundup. And genetic engineering is not an exact science — scientists can't be certain they haven't introduced other changes, which may turn out to be significant.

While there has been some assessment of the new soybean overseas, we're not satisfied it has been either independent or rigorous enough to be accepted unquestioningly. We want to see rigorous case-by-case assessment of all genetically engineered foods.

SOYBEANS IN OUR FOOD*

Soybeans — including genetically engineered ones — in one form or another could find their way into all the types of food listed below.

Whole soybean products

Soy foods

- Soy milks
- Soy sauces
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Miso

Roasted soybean

- Ingredients for confectionery and sweet and savoury biscuits
- Soynuts
- Soy nut butters
- Soy coffees

Processed products

Full-fat soy flour

- Breads
- Doughnut mixes
- Instant milk drinks
- Pancake flours
- Pie crusts

Soy lecithin (emulsifier 322)

- Bakery products
- Confectionery
- Chocolate coatings
- Ice creams
- Margarines
- Shortenings
- Medicines
- Vitamins

Soy oil

- Battered/breaded snacks and vegetables
- Breads
- Cooking oils
- Crackers
- Frozen fried seafood
- Margarines
- Mayonnaises
- Non-dairy creamers
- Potato and corn chips
- Salad dressings
- Sauces
- Shortenings
- Soups
- Stocks/bases
- Taco shells
- Whipped toppings

De-fatted soy flour

- Baked goods
- Pie crusts

Soy protein isolate

- Cheeses
- Coffee whiteners
- Frozen desserts
- Infant formulas
- Meat products
- Soy milks

Soy concentrate

- Meat products
- Protein drinks
- Soup bases
- Gravies

* Adapted from information provided by Monsanto



Just some of the hundreds of supermarket foods that could end up containing the genetically engineered soybean.

CHOICE thinks **ROUNDUP READY SOYBEANS** are different and you should be given the choice whether you wish to eat them or not. And the Dutch government, at least, agrees — it recently announced it will require all products containing the soybean to be labelled from April. There are many reasons why consumers want genetically engineered food labelled — including reasons that science can't measure, such as religious, philosophical and ethical beliefs, or simply your right to know.

What role do manufacturers and retailers play?

The Australian Food Council, which represents many of the manufacturers and processors who will receive the soybean, also holds the view that the 'gene bean' is exactly the same as a conventional soybean, and so can be used in processed foods without notifying anybody. We disagree.

In the European Union, where the first shipments of **ROUNDUP READY SOYBEANS** were delivered, a series of public protests has led some manufacturers and retailers to demand that the genetically engineered soybeans are kept separate from regular soybeans and products that contain them are properly labelled. Others are seeking alternative sources of supply — they will not knowingly use the genetically engineered product. CHOICE would like to see the same actions here.

What are your rights?

You have both a right to know and a right to choose, regarding all goods and services you use. In the case of the 'gene bean', you are being denied both of these. To take action, see *What you can do to help*, right.

What is genetic engineering?

The cells of all plants and animals contain DNA; it's like a blueprint for life, which is passed from generation to generation. DNA is made up of genes, and it's the genes that carry the information which makes plants, animals and humans have specific characteristics, such as green eyes or brown skin.

DNA can be changed by transferring genes between and within different living things — you might, for example, try putting a gene from a fish that lives in the very cold seas of the North Atlantic into a strawberry, so it can survive a frost.

Changing specific genes in order to change a plant or animal in a particular way is known as genetic engineering or genetic modification.

For more information, see *Gene Cuisine*, CHOICE May 1996.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

You can help CHOICE make a difference. The 'gene bean' is only one of many genetically engineered crops which will find their way into the entire food supply. Make your views on the 'gene bean' known, because how consumers respond will set a crucial precedent. Phone, fax or send a letter to the following key players.

■ Ask for fast-tracking of regulation on labelling and assessment of genetically engineered food products:

Senator Bob Woods, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Family Services, Parliament House, Canberra 2600. Phone (06) 277 3490, fax (06) 277 3577.

■ Ask Monsanto to provide community information on the 'gene bean' and a hotline for consumer queries:

Ms Marion Sheers, Regulatory and Communications Manager of Biotechnology, Monsanto Australia, PO Box 6051, St Kilda Road Central, Victoria 8008. Phone (03) 9522 7122, fax (03) 9525 2253.

■ Ask manufacturers and retailers to demand separation of 'gene beans', to label foods containing them and provide information in stores:

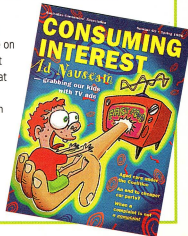
Mr Mitchell Hooke, Executive Director, Australian Food Council, 2-4 Brisbane Avenue, Barton 2600. Phone (06) 273 1466, fax (06) 273 1477.

Mr Bruce Bevan, Executive Director, Australian Supermarket Institute, 20 York Street, Sydney 2000. Phone (02) 9299 6126, fax (02) 9290 1045.

For more on the 'gene bean' and other food issues ...

The Summer edition of our policy and campaigning magazine *Consuming Interest* brings you an update on our food policy work — including more on the fight for labelling of the gene bean and the latest on what could be the dieter's worst enemy — the diet industry itself. We also follow up last issue's story on children's food advertising — thanks to all of you who wrote supporting the campaign to make kids' food advertising healthy.

For information on how to subscribe to *Consuming Interest*, see the order form on page 28.



TEST REPORT

You don't have to shell out a grand to enjoy a decent cup of espresso at home, but you'll have to spend more than \$200.

While the cheaper steam machines on test produce coffee, you probably won't get a true espresso.



Expert coffee-making

IN BRIEF

- The key to great espresso is a good machine, the right coffee in the right amount, and practice.
- Steam machines don't produce good-quality espresso.
- You can froth milk for cappuccino if you practise, practise ... but some machines make it easier than others.

LESS THAN 50 YEARS AFTER THE invention of the first pressurised coffee machine in 1901, espresso bars became the rage all around the world. Now, again less than 50 years later, more and more people who like a good Italian-style coffee also want to enjoy it at home and serve it to their guests.

Manufacturers are catering for this market with a wide range of espresso machines for home use. You can get one for less than \$100 or pay \$1000 — or even more.

To find out whether you really have to pay big bucks for a good espresso machine, we tested some models at the top end of the steam machine market — usually selling for less than \$200 — and some of the cheaper pump-action machines available from about \$200 upwards (see right for a description of the different systems).

What makes a good coffee?

Many ingredients go into making a good-quality coffee. You need a good coffee-making machine, the right amount and grind of a blend of coffee you like, and skill or at least lots of practice.

Traditional espresso coffee is very strong and slightly bitter. It's made in machines that force steam and water — at exactly the right temperature — through finely ground coffee to extract its flavour and aroma.

Espresso machines

Of the 14 espresso machines in our test, eight operate with a steam-pressure system, five have pump pressure and one a pump thermoblock system. On the following pages we explain what distinguishes the different espresso machine systems for home use and how they performed in our test.

All the models also have a steam nozzle to froth milk for cappuccino or other milky drinks (see *Not just a cuppa* on page 18). And the RUSSELL HOBBS Café Continental 3344 can also make a pot of drip-filter coffee — a good feature if you drink that regularly too.

The steam system

Steam-pressure espresso machines have a fairly basic design — they're generally smaller and lighter than pump machines and are reasonably easy to use and to keep clean.

Those we tested operate at relatively low pressure, so they won't produce a good crema (creamy froth) on your espresso — see *The perfect crema* on page 20. To extract the full flavour, and with it the tiny bubbles and oils that make up the crema, higher pressure is necessary.

And most of the steam machines in our test have no thermostat, so the water temperature can't be controlled, which is important to extract the optimum flavour from the ground coffee.

In our test:

■ All the steam machines performed poorly in the espresso taste test — they virtually produced no crema at all.

■ In nearly half of them the water or steam became too hot during brewing. They produced over-extracted espresso which tasted stewed or burnt.

■ When making the maximum four cups at a time, none of the steam machines worked well — they took a very long time to brew the coffee, again producing a burnt flavour.

However, if you only ever drink cappuccino or caffè latte, this may be less important to you — the hot milk and froth can mask the coffee's imperfect flavour and crema. So considering they can be much cheaper than some pump-pressure models, steam machines may be OK for milk coffees and other milky drinks.

The pump system

Pump-pressure machines operate at higher pressure than steam machines and all have thermostats to control the water temperature. With both these features they can usually produce espresso coffee which both tastes good and has a good crema — provided, of course, you use them correctly and with the right coffee (see below).

The pump machines in our test all have a water reservoir which you can fill to the maximum level and make several cups of coffee consecutively without having to refill the tank.

Machines with a **pump thermoblock** system operate with high pressure when making coffee and with half the pressure when frothing milk. In the thermoblock, the water is heated quickly to the right temperature for making coffee or frothing milk. The pump operates in both modes, so you can switch directly from one to the other.

In our test, the only pump thermoblock machine — the **SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 120** — was only just behind the top performer, the **KENWOOD ES 450**, which uses a pump system. The **SUNBEAM** fell back slightly in the taste test.

The right coffee

The type and origin of the coffee beans influence the flavour; so does the roasting method, the freshness of the beans and the way they're ground.

Try a few blends from those that suit your coffee maker until you find one you like. Espresso machine manufacturers usually recommend you use an Italian-style (espresso) blend — darkly roasted and finely ground.

The grind is very important. Even with the

best machine you won't be able to produce a good, strong espresso if the coffee beans are ground too coarsely. Instead you'll get a watery, weak coffee and a poor crema.

Follow the manufacturer's recommendations in the instructions, but if you're unhappy with the results, vary the amount and grind of coffee you use until you get a coffee that suits your taste. *The perfect crema* on page 20 gives tips on getting the best coffee from your machine.

WHAT TO BUY

■ **Pump and pump thermoblock machines** (suitable for any Italian-type coffee):

KENWOOD ES 450	\$225
SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 120	\$220
KRUPS Espresso Mondo K 989	\$299

■ **Steam machines** (not recommended for espresso, but OK for cappuccino and other milky drinks):

ENCORE 3856	\$ 99
DELONGHI Caffé Parma Bar 6	\$130
RUSSELL HOBBS Café Continental 3344 *	\$130

* This machine can also make drip-filter coffee.

As far as the coffee taste is concerned, the pump and pump thermoblock machines recommended above stood out from the rest. They scored very well and cost less than \$300.

If you're a coffee connoisseur, don't bother with a steam machine. The ones in our test all scored less than 50% in the taste test. But if getting a 'true' espresso is less important because you prefer cappuccino, for example, the three steam machines listed above at least gave good milk froth and coffee at a decent temperature in a reasonable amount of time.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

■ If you want to make 'true' espresso, go for a pump or pump thermoblock machine.

■ If you want to be able to make cup after cup, a pump machine is a better choice — steam machines get too hot.

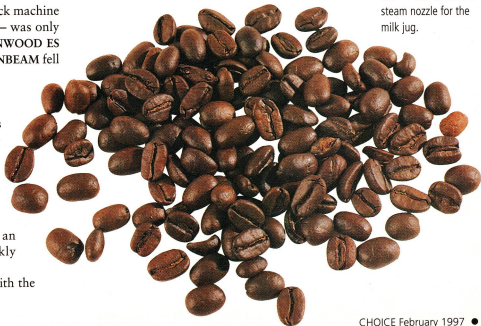
■ Look for easy-to-clean surfaces and controls that are easy to operate.

■ If you intend to use the machine's steam nozzle regularly to froth milk, say for hot chocolate, make sure you can do so without having to make coffee first. (You can't with the **GAGGIA Fantastico II**, for example.)

■ Drip trays and grilles that can be removed are easier to keep clean.

■ Check the filter basket holder. If it holds the filter basket securely in place, emptying it will be easier and safer — you don't have to touch it when it's hot.

■ Make sure there's enough space under the brewing head for the cups or jug you want to use — and under the steam nozzle for the milk jug.



Not just a cuppa

We tested the espresso coffee each machine produced. But you can make a lot of other interesting coffee variations based on this basic type of Italian coffee. Below is a list of what they're called and how they're made.

Espresso should be served in a demitasse. It's 40-45 mL of coffee with a good crema on top, made from about 7-8 g of fine, dark roasted coffee. (In Australia, 60 mL is also a common measure for an espresso.)

Short black (also called **ristretto** or **short espresso**) is similar to espresso, but with a more concentrated aroma — the water flow is cut short at about 20-30 mL.

Long black (or **long espresso**) is served in a cappuccino cup (about 150 mL). It's the standard espresso with added hot water to make it up to 90 mL. Don't let the added hot water run through the ground coffee — it'll make it taste bitter.

Double espresso is two measuring spoons of coffee used to make 90 mL (or 120 mL) of espresso.

Macchiato is an espresso with one spoonful of milk froth on top.

What we tested

From the widely available espresso machines on the market, we tested each brand's most expensive steam and cheapest pump model (where a brand had one of each).

The **BLACK & DECKER EM20** and **EM50**, **KAMBROOK ECM 64** and **KENWOOD ES 310** were released too late for inclusion in our test.



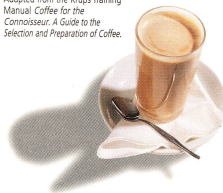
Cappuccino is served in a cappuccino cup of about 150 mL. It consists of one-third espresso and two-thirds hot froth and steamed milk, which is either poured directly into the espresso (the Italian way) or, as is done in Australia, separated into hot steamed milk, which is added first, and froth, with which the cappuccino is topped, before it's sprinkled with powdered chocolate.

Caff  latte is usually served in a *latte* glass (about 250 mL). It contains more milk than coffee. Depending on your taste, you can make it with one or two espressos and then fill the glass with hot steamed milk and a minimum of froth.

Caff  mocha is served in a mug or glass. It consists of a standard espresso mixed with the same amount of strong, hot drinking chocolate and topped with hot frothed milk.

Viennese (or **Vienna coffee**) is served in a cappuccino cup. It's a standard or double espresso with a dollop of whipped cream and sprinkled with grated dark chocolate.

Adapted from the Krups Training Manual Coffee for the Connoisseur: A Guide to the Selection and Preparation of Coffee.



Expert help

Our thanks go to the four expert tasters — Wayne Archer (Harris D.E.), Ian Bersten (Belaroma), Muzio Cantarella (Vittoria), Tony Witham (Witham & Company) — who gave their time and expertise to taste and evaluate espresso made in the 14 different machines. Their score formed 40% of the overall score.

Our thanks also to Rose Cara from the Caff  Cinquecento in Sydney for her expert advice on frothing milk.

Expert taster Tony Witham at work.



PROFILES

Prices shown

Pump and pump thermobill Italian-style espresso



KENWOOD ES 450

Target price: \$225

Type: Pump system.

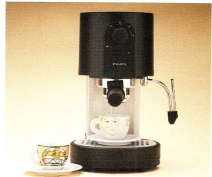
Capacity: One or two cups at a time.

Good points

- Produces espresso with a good crema and very good flavour.
- Best machine in the test for general performance (which includes coffee temperature, steaming capacity, milk froth and speed).
- Has a tamping device (to press down the coffee evenly into the filter basket) and a compartment to keep the measuring spoon.
- Clear water-level window on the removable water tank.
- 'Ready' light comes on when the machine has warmed up.

Bad points

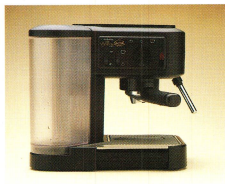
- Only fairly short cups will fit under the brewing head.
- The controls for frothing are a little difficult to use.
- The frothing nozzle is close to the machine and bench, which makes moving the jug around more difficult.



Krups Espresso Mondo K 989

ood target to aim for when shopping around, based on nationwide checks in October 1996. Anything lower is a bargain.

machines: for good



SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 120

Target price: \$220

Type: Pump thermoblock system.

Capacity: One or two cups at a time.

Good points

- Produces espresso with a very good aroma and a good crema.
- Second-best machine in the test for general performance (which includes coffee temperature, steaming capacity, milk froth and speed).
- Controls and steam nozzle are easy to use.
- Has a water-level indicator for the drip tray.
- Clear water-level window on the removable water tank.
- 'Ready' light.

Bad points

- Filter holder tends to become loose.

Steam-pressure machines: cheaper, not recommended for espresso but OK for cappuccino and other milky drinks



ENCORE 3856

Target price: \$99

Capacity: Two or four cups at a time.

Good points

- Froths milk well.
- Lightweight, small and of simple design.

Bad points

- Produces espresso with very little crema and little aroma.
- No temperature control.
- Has problems producing coffee of consistent quality when used at full capacity (four cups). You need to experiment with the amount of coffee and the grind.



RUSSELL HOBBS Café Continental 3344

Target price: \$130

Capacity: Two or four cups at a time.

Good points

- Can also make drip-filter coffee (1.1 L).
- With the 'strength selector' you can select the degree to which coffee flavour and aroma are extracted.
- There's sufficient space to fit the jug easily under the steam nozzle.

Bad points

- Produces espresso with poor crema and burnt flavour.
- No temperature control.
- You can easily burn yourself on the hot filter when emptying it.

KRUPS Espresso Mondo K 989

Target price: \$299

Type: Pump-pressure system.

Capacity: One or two cups at a time.

Good points

- Produces espresso with a very good flavour, good aroma and an acceptable crema.
- Good general performance (which includes coffee temperature, steaming capacity, milk froth and speed).
- Controls are easy to use.
- Good height for jug under steam nozzle and under the brew head for a mug.
- Clear water-level window on the removable water tank.
- 'Ready' light.
- Two espresso cups and saucers are included.

Bad points

- The grille on the water tray vibrated and was noisy.



DeLonghi Caffé Parma Bar 6

DELONGHI Caffé Parma Bar 6

Target price: \$130

Capacity: Two or four cups at a time.

Good points

- Froths milk well.
- Simple design and easy-to-use controls.
- There's sufficient space to fit the jug easily under the steam nozzle.
- With the 'strength selector' you can select the degree to which coffee flavour and aroma are extracted.
- Steam nozzle is made of plastic, so it doesn't get too hot and can't burn you.

Bad points

- Produces espresso with no crema, stewed flavour and little aroma.
- No temperature control.
- Has problems producing coffee of consistent quality when used at full capacity (four cups).

ESPRESSO MACHINES

1

2

3

	Brand / model (in rank order)	Manufacturer / distributor	Price (\$)*	Warranty (years)	Origin	Type	Filter basket(s) and capacity (cups)	Cup-warming area	Cord storage
	KENWOOD ES 450	Breville	225	1	Portugal	Pump	3 (1+2) (c)		
	SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 120	Sunbeam	220	1	China	Pump thermoblock	2 (1+2)	✓	✓
	KRUPS Espresso Mondo K 989	Mobex	299	1	France	Pump	2 (1+2)		
	BRAUN Espresso Cappuccino Pro E 300	Braun	369	1	Germany	Pump	2 (2+4)	✓	✓
equal	DELONGHI Caffè Treviso Bar 14	Gantech	360	1	Italy	Pump	2 (1+2)		
	GAGGIA Espresso	Gaggia Coffee Mio	395	1	Italy	Pump	2 (1+2) (d)		
	ENCORE 3856	CPS Housewares	99	1	China	Steam	1 (2+4)	✓	
equal	DELONGHI Caffè Parma Bar 6	Gantech	130	1	Italy	Steam	1 (2+4)		
	RUSSELL HOBBS Café Continental 3344 (A)	Russell Hobbs	130	1	China	Steam	1 (2+4)		
equal	BRAUN Espresso Master Plus E 40	Braun	199	1	Switzerland	Steam	1 (2+4)	✓	
	SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 100	Sunbeam	99	1	China	Steam	1 (2+4)	✓	
	KRUPS Espresso Prego K 993	Mobex	199	1	Switzerland	Steam	1 (2+4)	✓	
equal	GAGGIA Fantastico II	Gaggia Coffee Mio	129 (B)	1	Italy	Steam	1 (2+4)	✓	
	MOULINEX Duomo Caffè Mini Q 85	Mobex	159	1	Switzerland	Steam	1 (2+4)	✓	

* Prices shown are a good target to aim for when shopping around, based on nationwide checks in October 1996. Anything lower is a bargain.

(A) This machine can also make drip-filter coffee.

(B) We couldn't find this machine in the shops when we checked for prices, although according to the manufacturer it's not been discontinued. This is the maximum price as indicated by the manufacturer.

(C) The third filter basket has a 'super crema' device on the bottom to help produce a good crema. It can produce two cups.

(D) A special 'crema disk' is provided for use with coarsely ground coffee (we didn't test it as we used finely ground coffee).

The perfect crema

Perhaps the most important thing that distinguishes espresso from other types of coffee is its crema — the creamy, pale golden froth on top. If it's as it's supposed to be — thick and stable — it'll preserve the coffee flavour, aroma and temperature.

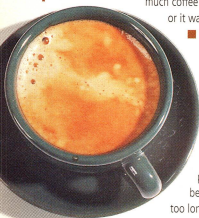
The crema can also help you 'diagnose' where your espresso-making could have gone wrong:

■ If the crema is light, inconsistent, thin and dissipates quickly, the coffee has been under-extracted; it was probably too coarsely ground or the water temperature was too low.

■ If it's dark and has a hole in the middle, either too much coffee was in the filter basket or it was compacted too firmly.

■ If it's white and has big bubbles, the coffee was probably over-extracted because the water temperature was too high.

■ If it's just a white spot in the middle of the cup, the coffee was probably over-extracted because it percolated for too long.



Frothing the milk

With all the espresso machines in our test you can steam milk to make the essential milk froth for a cappuccino or macchiato, or for foaming hot chocolate drinks.

To become an expert at frothing milk, you'll probably have to experiment just as much as to make a great espresso. You're looking for a froth that's thick, dense and shiny.

The hints below should help you get a good froth consistently.

■ Pour fresh cold milk into a stainless steel jug to just less than half full.

■ Turn on the steam control switch for a few seconds to release any built-up steam and water, then place the steam nozzle into the jug just below the surface of the milk.

■ Angle the jug slightly and turn on the steam to full pressure.

■ Move the jug around the nozzle — create a whirlpool effect.

■ Froth the milk until the sides of the jug become too hot to touch comfortably. At this stage, small bubbles should have formed and the milk should almost have doubled in volume.

■ Plunge the nozzle to the bottom of the jug and heat the milk (but don't let it boil) until the jug gets too hot to hold, except by the handle. Your frothed milk is ready.



Which milk?

Fresh, full-cream milk is best suited for frothing. If you want to cut down on fat, you can also use light or skim milk, but the froth will dissipate sooner because it's more aerated and has larger, less stable bubbles.

5	6	7	8	9	10	
Time to brew first two cups (minutes and seconds)	Coffee temperature (°C)	Ability to froth milk	Ease of use score (%)	Taste test score (%)	Performance score (%)	Overall score (%)
2:00	78	Very good	80	80	93	84
1:30	69	Very good	87	74	91	83
2:30	67	Good	86	70	86	79
6:30	73	Good to fair	89	59	78	74
2:30	66	Good to fair	85	58	77	72
6:30	77	Very good	82	53	86	72
3:00	76	Very good	71	45	86	65
2:00	80	Very good	74	38	88	64
2:30	74	Good to very good	76	41	84	64
2:30	74	Good to fair	72	39	79	61
3:00	75	Good to fair	71	41	78	61
3:00	78	Fair	71	41	71	59
6:30	82	Good to fair	73	36	70	57
3:30	80	Good to fair	65	39	74	57
						Brand / model (in rank order)
						KENWOOD ES 450
						SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 120
						KRUPS Espresso Mondo K 989
						BRAUN Espresso Cappuccino Pro E 300
						DE'LONGHI Caffè Treviso Bar 14
						GAGGIA Espresso
						ENCORE 3856
						DE'LONGHI Caffè Parma Bar 6
						RUSSELL HOBBS Café Continental 3344 (A)
						BRAUN Espresso Master Plus E 40
						SUNBEAM Club Cappuccino 100
						KRUPS Espresso Prego K 993
						GAGGIA Fantastico II
						MOULINEX Duomo Caffè Mini Q 85

1 Type

Espresso machines with a pump (or pump thermoblock) system generally produce espresso with a good crema. The steam machines we tested don't — but they're usually less expensive and may be OK for cappuccino or other milky drinks. All the machines in the test can froth milk.

2 Number of filter baskets and capacity

The espresso machines in our test had either one filter basket with two markings inside (for one and two cups of coffee, or for two and four cups) or two filter baskets of different sizes. The **KENWOOD ES 450** also had a third 'super crema' basket — see footnote (C).

3 Cord storage

It's handy if excess cord can be coiled underneath or put into a cavity.

4 Jug/spoon supplied

All the steam machines plus the **BRAUN Espresso Cappuccino Pro E 300** dispense the coffee through a single nozzle into a glass jug (J) that's supplied with the machine. With the pump machines that have two dispensing nozzles, you put a cup underneath each (or one cup centred underneath the nozzles). Most machines supply a spoon for measuring the ground coffee (S).

5 Time

This is the time it took us (rounded to the nearest 30 seconds) to brew the first two cups of coffee (120 ml. total, the usual size of two

Australian espresso cups). It includes the time it takes the machine to warm up.

With a pump machine you can make subsequent cups of coffee straightaway. However, you'll have to let a steam machine cool down first before you can make more coffee.

6 Coffee temperature

This is the temperature of the brewed coffee in the cup or jug after stirring for five seconds. An espresso machine should be able to produce coffee with a drinking temperature of at least 70°C. The temperature can vary depending on factors such as the amount of coffee and how tightly packed it is, or when you make several cups one after the other.

7 Ease of use score

For this score we awarded points for how easy it was to brew coffee, froth milk and reuse the machine after 15 minutes. We also assessed how easy it was to fill each machine with water, load it with coffee and clean it, and how easy the instructions and safety warnings were to understand.

8 Taste test score

The machines were set to two-cup capacity and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Four expert tasters then evaluated the espresso prepared by each machine. They awarded

points for the colour and thickness of the crema, the aroma, flavour, 'mouthfeel' and aftertaste.

9 Performance score

For this score we assessed the quality of the milk froth, the temperature of the coffee and how long it took to brew it, and the machines' steaming capacity (how well they could heat up milk and by how much its volume increased). We also awarded points for how well the machine functioned at maximum capacity.

10 Overall score

The scores were weighted as follows to give the overall score:

- Taste test: 40%.
- Performance: 30%.
- Ease of use: 30%.





YOUR LETTERS

No, thank you

I am writing to you in support of your efforts in the push for comprehensive labelling of all foodstuffs containing material which has a genetically engineered component.

I am a mother of two small children and I do all the shopping for the family. I feel extremely strongly about this issue, which has two main components for me. One is an ethical concern about genetic engineering in general and the other is a health and safety issue. I strongly believe I have the right to know which products contain materials I would prefer to avoid.

Please keep up your good work and maintain the pressure on the Australia New Zealand Food Authority. I think this is a vital issue for consumers and it is important that, as genetic engineering of food components appears to be the unhappy and unavoidable wave of the future, consumers at least have the ability to say "no, thank you" in the supermarket aisles, if we can't do so in the laboratories.

Shelley Keeble
Neutral Bay, NSW

The Australia New Zealand Food Authority is working on a draft standard for labelling genetically engineered foods, thanks to the pressure we were able to put on the government with subscribers' help.

But the fight isn't over yet. Spilling the 'gene beans' on page 14 of this issue has the startling news that genetically engineered soybeans are on their way into many of our processed foods, and with not so much as a whisper on the label.

If you want to help make a difference, put pen to paper, as Ms Keeble has done — the contact details for the decision makers are on page 15.

Upside down

As a wine lover, I read your review of sparkling wines in the December '96 issue of CHOICE with interest. When I compared it with the similar article in the December 1994 issue, however, I became a little perplexed.

Many wines had gone from near the bottom of the list to the top and vice versa. Do commercial non-vintage wines really vary that much over two



years? Or is it perhaps, as I have often wondered, that when faced with a blind tasting, some experts are as much in the dark as the rest of us!

As for vintage wines, it seems odd that Piper-Heidsieck Brut 1985 was bottom of the over \$16 list in 1994, but rose to the top in 1996. Is the 1985 vintage still being distributed or is this a misprint? If it's been in the bottle an extra two years, your article tells me it would be past its best and not dramatically improving in the manner of biblical miracles (or nearly).

I would greatly appreciate an explanation and an answer to my questions, as the credibility of your testing now seems in doubt.

Rod Stone
Langwarrin, Victoria

Many of the brands of non-vintage champagnes and sparkling wines fared differently in this tasting from the December 1994 report. There are a number of possible reasons for the change in quality — the weather and therefore the quality of the grapes, the equipment, the winemakers involved and company policy can all vary from year to year.

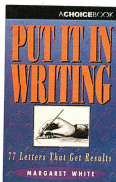
All these factors can affect the quality of a wine.

In the case of the vintage wines and the Piper-Heidsieck Brut 1985, its dramatically improved performance could have been due to different disgorgement times. Not all bottles in a particular champagne vintage are disgorged at once, but rather they're disgorged and released onto the market at different times. The bottle tested in 1996 could have had an additional 12 months ageing on its 'lees' before disgorgement compared to that tested in 1994.

In addition, the tasters commented that the Piper-Heidsieck tasted in 1994 had a trace of sulphur, which could indicate it was recently disgorged and the residual sulphur hadn't yet dissipated. This would have a marked effect on the flavour of the wine. Yet another possibility is that Piper-Heidsieck is one of the very small percentage of vintage champagnes that does 'age on the cork' and therefore improve with age.

For all these reasons (as well as the new brands) we update champagne and sparkling wines every two years. It's best to use the most recent article when choosing one. □

LETTER OF THE MONTH



We want to hear from you — your experiences help us greatly in our research. We'd also like to hear your experiences using CHOICE to buy a product or service: did it save you money, time or disappointment?

To say thanks for writing to us, each Your Letters will award a prize of a CHOICE book to the 'Letter of the month'. This month's winner, Rod Stone of Langwarrin in Victoria, receives *Put it in writing* for his letter.

Unfortunately we don't have the resources to answer all your letters personally. We also reserve the right to cut parts of longer letters for publication. See page 2 for how to reach us by mail, fax or e-mail.

DUTY-FREE SHOPPING IN AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

Brisbane	89.95
Melbourne	89.95
Sydney	79.95
Darwin	Not available
Perth	79.95
Cairns	79.95
RRP	99.95



Pocket Gameboy 71028



Brisbane	95.00
Melbourne	Not available
Sydney	89.95
Darwin	Not available
Perth	89.00
Cairns	89.95
RRP	109.95

Electronic organiser Casio SF-4600



Brisbane	75.50
Melbourne	72.50
Sydney	71.00
Darwin	Not available
Perth	71.00
Cairns	71.00
Qantas on-board	70.00
RRP	107.00

Chanel No 5 — 50 mL



Brisbane	42.50
Melbourne	42.95
Sydney	40.95
Darwin	40.45
Perth	40.95
Cairns	40.95

Kodak 35 mm, 8-pack ISO 200 (8-pack is only available duty-free)

Brisbane	43.95
Melbourne	42.50
Sydney	43.95
Darwin	49.95
Perth	43.95
Cairns	43.95

Johnny Walker Black Label 1.25 L (1.25 L size can only be bought duty-free)



Brisbane	Not available
Melbourne	159.00
Sydney	159.00
Darwin	153.00
Perth	159.00
Cairns	159.00
RRP	199.95

Sony Discman D153



Burning rubber

Around 10 million used tyres are ready for the tip each year in Australia.

But dumping them in landfill isn't the best solution.

ILLEGAL TYRE DUMPS AREN'T uncommon in Australia. People after a fast buck collect used tyres from dealers for a fee, then dump them on a plot of land and disappear. Unfortunately, the tyres don't disappear with similar ease — instead the problem grows worse.

Vermin and mosquitoes begin to breed as the tyres fill with water, or someone sets them on fire — an ecological disaster in itself. These fires smoulder for days, giving off toxic fumes and chemicals which leach into the surrounding ground and water systems.

The best way to reduce illegal dumping is for state governments to put licensing requirements in place and strictly police collection and disposal of tyres (see *What the states are doing*, opposite) — in tandem with tyre recycling.

Recycling

Currently, there are several recycling options in Australia, but not all are national. One of the most common options for tyres is retreading, which extends the tyre's life, but doesn't solve the problem once it's really over.

Some companies in Australia are already recycling tyres into other products. For example, two tyre manufacturers — Pacific Dunlop and Bridgestone — have

researched and created their own recycling systems. One Pacific Dunlop division, Encore Rubber Technologies, uses waste from the retreading process ("buffings") to create rubber crumb, which is then sold to companies which turn it into rubberised asphalt, adhesives, rubber pavers, roofing tiles, porous hoses and playground surfaces.

Another Pacific Dunlop division, Tyre Cycle, is a collection agent for tyres. It sells some to retreaders or used tyre dealers. It also collects waste tyres in NSW, Queensland and SA and shreds them for landfill.

In Victoria, the company supplies tyres to Blue Circle Southern Cement, which uses them to fuel its kilns. The EPA in Victoria says the high temperature in such kilns eliminates most pollutants normally given off by tyre fires.

Bridgestone has developed Playsafe (now owned by a private contractor), a rubbery surface used in playgrounds to give children a softer landing should they fall (see photo). The product is now being used for a wide variety of purposes, including sports surfaces, horse exercise tracks and slip-resistant surfaces around pools and other wet areas.

While it's a positive step that tyres are being put to such uses, more economically viable recycling options need to be found to cope with the tonnes of tyres companies such as these simply can't use.

The alternatives to recycling

Being buried in landfill — shredded or whole, depending on state law — is probably the most common current destination for used tyres — unless they end up in an illegal tyre dump.

In 1992, the Australian New Zealand Environment Conservation Council

(ANZECC), made up of the environment ministers, agreed to ban whole tyres from landfill. This is slowly being implemented around the country (see *What the states are doing*, right).

Shredding tyres is preferable to dumping them whole — over time whole tyres tend to rise to the surface, making future use of the landfill site difficult. They also take up a larger amount of landfill space.

The next step would be to ban shredded tyres too, but this is unlikely to become policy until enough recycling options are in place.

Alternatively, tyres can be buried in a specially built trench, to be mined later as a resource once recycling technology has caught up.

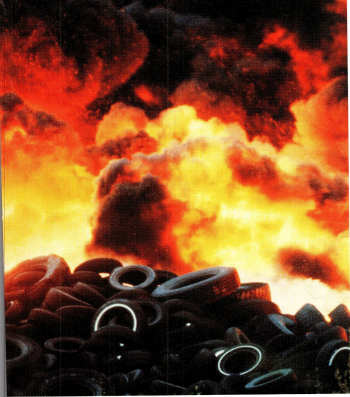
Industry solutions

In an effort to come up with a workable solution to the scrap tyre problem, the Australian Scrap Tyre Management Council — a representative body of the tyre industry formed in 1994 — developed a national proposal on tyre disposal, suggesting that:

- Whole tyre dumping in landfill be banned immediately.
- Targets for scrap tyre recycling be set.
- All scrap tyre collectors and scrap tyre processing depots be licensed.
- All tyre retail outlets use only licensed tyre collectors or depots, and that they store their tyres according to set guidelines.
- Retreaders and recyclers be accountable for their stock and be able to prove they are dealing with licensed collectors or depots.
- Consumers be charged a compulsory levy for the safe disposal of scrap tyres, which should go towards transport and recycling costs and research into new recycling methods.



Some used tyres are now recycled into playground surfacing, to give kids a softer landing.



WHAT THE STATES ARE DOING

The states and territories are responsible for developing their own scrap-tyre strategies. Here's the current situation in each state.

ACT

- No licensing requirements for scrap-tyre collectors.
- No commercially viable projects that make tyre recycling worthwhile.
- Tyres are stored whole in a dedicated trench at a government site, from which they can be retrieved if a recycling option becomes available.

NSW

- Used tyres are defined as 'waste' and tyre transporters, depots and manufacturers are regulated and licensed.
- There are heavy penalties for dumping tyres and for not complying with regulations.
- Whole tyres were banned from landfill from January 1997.
- Tyre tracking and disposal levy systems are being discussed with industry.
- At least three companies are turning tyres into crumbed rubber for recycling.

Northern Territory

- A draft management paper on used tyres is being drawn up.
- The majority of scrap tyres are buried whole.
- Some tyres are sent to SA for retreading.

Queensland

- Used tyres are classed as 'waste' and are therefore regulated.
- Transporters, storers and disposers must be licensed.
- Used-tyre collectors must have local council approval to operate.
- Tyre retailers are to be registered and pay a monthly franchise fee, based on their sales, to cover disposal costs — likely to be introduced in mid 1997.
- A tracking system may be introduced by mid 1997.
- Some factories are developing recycled products. A rubber powderisation plant is already

in operation and other recycling methods are being investigated, such as clean burning of tyres to provide energy for cement kilns.

- Whole tyres not yet banned from landfill.

South Australia

- Used-tyre collectors are licensed.
- A tyre-tracking system is in place to help combat dumping.
- SA has a large tyre-retreading industry.
- Some tyres are recycled — for example, into Playsafe's soft playground surfaces.
- A plant is being built to recover gas, oil, carbon black and steel from used tyres.
- Whole tyres are banned from landfill.

Tasmania

- One licensed contractor collects, stores and disposes of tyres across the whole state.
- A consumer levy of \$2 per tyre to fund disposal has been introduced.
- Whole tyres will be banned from landfill (as of about March 1997).
- Tyre tracking system expected to be introduced March 1997.

Victoria

- A draft policy on Industrial Waste Management, which includes tyres, has been released.
- Many used tyres are recycled into asphalt, sporting tracks and fuel for cement kilns.
- Whole tyres are banned from landfill.

Western Australia

- Companies storing more than 500 used tyres must be licensed.
- Used-tyre transporters are regulated.
- A factory is being built to produce crumbed rubber and recover steel, and tyre storers will have to send tyres there in preference to dumping them.
- A law to prevent tyres being buried in landfill in metropolitan areas is being developed. It's expected it will only be permitted in specific urban areas, and that resulting high transport costs to rural landfills will encourage recycling and retreading.
- A levy for using urban landfill sites may be introduced and used to fund a recycling and waste reduction program.

In addition, the industry Council wants dealers caught working outside the proposed system heavily fined, and state authorities to insist on documentation at each level of disposal so they can keep track of the tyres.

The Council also wants secondhand tyres banned from importation into Australia, or at least restricted to those which are still usable, with a minimum tread depth of 4 mm. It believes some 30% of imported secondhand tyres currently go straight to landfill.

The proposal has generally been well received by the different state environment departments, and some have already implemented the licensing of tyre collectors. Environmental groups have also supported many of the industry's suggestions.

What next?

Ideally, CHOICE would like to see a national policy on tyre recycling so that loopholes created by differing state legislation are closed, but Australian law makes this unlikely.

Under the Australian Constitution, each state or territorial government is responsible for environment policy and legislation, which covers scrap tyre disposal — so unless they all agree on a common policy, loopholes are likely to remain. □



Read the news today?

TECHNO SPEAK

Special abbreviations, acronyms and symbols have evolved to counter some of the limitations of newsgroups' text-only communication. In particular they're used to save time and space — for example:

IMHO: In my humble opinion.

BTW: By the way.

AFAIC: As far as I can see.

RSN: Real soon now.

FAQ: Frequently asked question.

Another limitation of text-only communication is that you don't hear voice tone or see body language — so it's easy to misinterpret messages. To overcome this, a series of symbols, also known as smileys or emoticons, are used. They're made up of keyboard characters (you have to look at them sideways for them to make sense). For example:

:-) or :) smiley
;-) winking smiley
:-o surprised.

Other terms you're likely to come across:

Cross-post: A message which is sent to several newsgroups at the same time.

Flame: An angry message on a newsgroup.

Moderated: Some newsgroups are 'moderated'. This means all messages are checked to make sure they're relevant before they're posted on the newsgroup.

Got something to say, but no one to say it to?

Internet newsgroups could be the perfect soapbox for your views.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN JUGGLING, it's unlikely that your next-door neighbour or best friend is interested in discussing it with you. So where can you go to discuss its finer points?

Internet newsgroups, also called Usenet newsgroups or conferences, are areas on the Internet where people can leave messages for each other relating to a specific topic. 'Newsgroups' is probably a misleading name, since much of what you'll find in a newsgroup consists of opinions, comments, rumours, gossip, questions and answers.

There are more than 7000 newsgroups on the Internet, covering every conceivable topic. For the budding juggler there's one called rec.juggling where you can talk about juggling techniques, equipment and events. There are newsgroups devoted to discussing abortion, acne, algebra, aliens, Amiga, anarchism, architecture, astrology and so on — and that's just a very small sample of topics that start with A.

How newsgroups work

When you connect to a newsgroup, you're able to read messages left by others. You can also post your own message or a response to someone else's.

Your message is automatically transferred to other computers connected to the Internet that carry that newsgroup. It's quite possible to carry on conversations with dozens of participants in numerous countries.

How do you do it?

To get onto newsgroups, you'll need a computer, modem and a connection to the Internet. See *Anyone for Internet?* in the June 1996 issue of CHOICE

for more information on how to get connected.

Because newsgroups consist mainly of text, you can get away with using a slightly older machine than if you want to use the World Wide Web — say a 486-based PC or 68040-based Mac.

Once you have your computer connected, you'll need a software package called a newsreader to download messages — you get it from your Internet access provider. If you didn't get one when you signed up with your access provider, contact the company to find out how to obtain the software it recommends for use with its service. Some Web browsers, such as Netscape Navigator, also allow access to newsgroups.

As with any use of the Internet, watch how long you're connected — you're paying your access provider all the time you're hooked into the newsgroup. Most newsreaders can be set so that all the messages you want to read can be downloaded from the Internet in one go. You can then disconnect from the Internet and read them at your leisure. □



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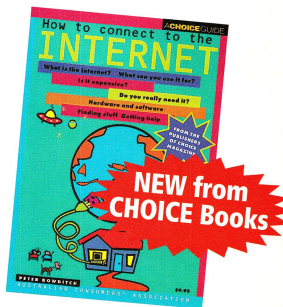
How to Connect to the Internet

Peter Bowditch

Now that you've bought your computer you're probably considering whether to get onto the Internet. If you do, how do you do it, and what can you do with it once you're connected?

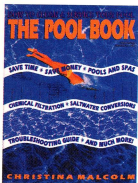
With a minimum of jargon and hype, *How to Connect to the Internet* explains the Internet, how to find your way around it and how to use it to your best advantage.

NET \$10



The Pool Book: How to Clean and Service Your Pool

This book explains how to clean your pool or spa, and how to identify and rectify common problems. It includes advice for both chemical and saltwater systems.



HCYP \$6

All About Asthma

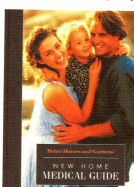
Approximately 1.8 million Australians are clinically diagnosed as asthmatics. This book explains the condition and gives advice about alleviating it. It also covers childhood asthma, triggers and medication.



AAA \$17

New Home Medical Guide

This family medical guide offers fundamental advice for dealing with everyday medical problems your family may face. It won't



replace a doctor but does give you plenty of practical information.

NHMG \$40

Gardening: A Commonsense Guide

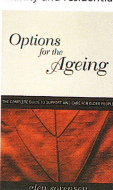
A practical guide to gardening which helps you to plan your garden, select plants, combat weeds and keep your garden and lawn looking their best all year round. Full of



colour photographs, it comes in a plastic sleeve for outdoor use.
GACG \$18

Options for Ageing

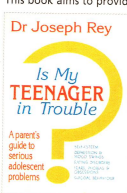
A practical guide to the common issues regarding ageing in Australia. It examines the options available including family, community and residential care, and includes a



useful Further Reading chapter at the back.
OFA\$20

Is My Teenager in Trouble?

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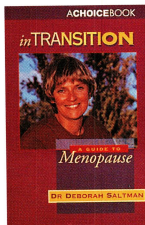


A-Z of Chemicals in the Home

Chemicals surround us, but do you know which ones are safe and which need caution?

The *A-Z of Chemicals in the Home* is a household reference for chemicals and products that use them. In an easy-to-follow alphabetical directory, each entry describes the product or chemical, its health and environmental effects, and gives suggestions for alternatives where available. It includes poisons information, a glossary of terms, and a further reading list.

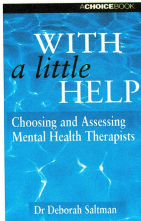
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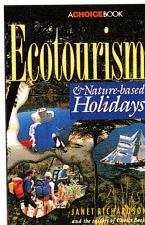
IT \$17



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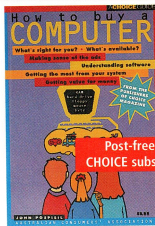
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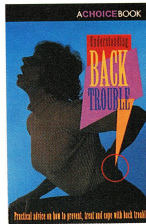


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HBC \$10



Understanding Back Trouble

About 75% of Australians will experience back pain at some stage in their life. This book explains how your back works, how to protect it, what can go wrong and what treatments (traditional and alternative) are available.

UBT \$18



Setting up a personal trust fund

In this article we answer common questions on personal trusts.

How do you set one up and what should you look out for?

What is a trust?

A trust is a legal arrangement in which assets such as money and property are managed on behalf of someone else (the beneficiary).

Why set up a trust?

You can set up a trust for any number of reasons (including for tax purposes — see *Deed trusts*, opposite). Many trusts are set up for people who are unable to look after the assets themselves — for example, children under the age of 18 (who are too young by law to own property), or someone with an intellectual disability.

In circumstances such as these, trusts can provide peace of mind if you want to ensure loved ones will be looked after when their carer has died, or if you can no longer cope with having to look after the beneficiary's assets yourself. Trusts can also be set up to provide the beneficiary with an income.

Who is the beneficiary?

The beneficiary can be one or more people or an organisation, such as a charity. They benefit from the assets in the trust and/or the income earned from the assets (such as interest or rent).

While the beneficiary can have an income from the assets, he or she doesn't own them unless the trust specifies the assets may be given to the beneficiary at a certain point or when the trust ends.

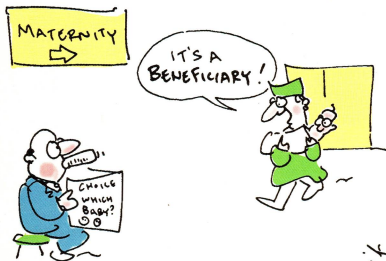
What types of trust are there?

There are many different types of trust, and even within types there are variations, depending on the type of assets or the requirements of the beneficiary. More information on the different types is given opposite.

Essentially, there are two groups of trust — those that begin operating while you're alive (deed trusts, also known as inter-vivos trusts) and trusts set up by your will (testamentary trusts).

Both types may bring tax benefits. Your accountant, solicitor or trustee organisation will be able to tell you what taxes are applicable in your state.

Each type of trust can be discretionary, partly discretionary or 'fixed'. Discretionary trusts give the trustee (the trust manager) freedom to decide how the money should be spent on the beneficiary and (if there is more than one) which beneficiary needs it most. How much freedom the trustee has depends on what is specified in the trust document — for example, in a partly discretionary trust you may be specific about some spending, such as for education, but leave the rest of the decisions to the trustee's discretion. A fixed trust doesn't allow any freedom of decision by the trustee.



Who can set up a trust?

Because a trust is a legal arrangement with specific requirements, we recommend you have it set up by a professional: a solicitor, the public trustee in your state, or a private trustee company.

The circumstances of the trust are set out in a document called the trust deed, or in your will if the trust is to operate after your death. These documents must be carefully worded to ensure there is no doubt about your intention to create a trust, which assets are to be included, who the beneficiaries are and any other requirements you want included in the trust.

Who manages the trust?

The person or company that manages a trust is known as the trustee. The trustee is legally responsible for the trust fund and ensures it's properly invested and looked after. You can nominate more than one trustee.

You can choose a family member or friend, your solicitor, accountant or professional adviser, the public trustee in your state, a private trustee

company or a combination of these, for example a friend and the public trustee in your state (see *How do you choose a trustee?* on page 34). The trustee can — but doesn't have to — be the same person or company that sets up the trust fund for you.

However, being a trustee involves a lot of time and responsibility, so a number of factors need to be taken into consideration when deciding who would be appropriate, especially if you're thinking of asking an individual rather than a company. You need to consider:

- The potential trustee's age — if the beneficiary is young the trust may need to be administered for many years.
- Their business experience, including knowledge of income tax, investments and social security benefits.
- Objectivity — the trustee should be able to make impartial, unbiased decisions.
- Human interest — the trustee must be sympathetic to the beneficiary's needs, and must maintain a continued interest in their life (especially, for

(continued overleaf)

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRUST

Testamentary trusts

These trusts are created in your will and begin functioning after you've died. There are many types of testamentary trust, but the most common are:

- **Life estates:** This trust might apply to money which advantages the beneficiary during their lifetime, or property such as a home which the beneficiary can rent out or live in throughout their life, but they don't end up owning the assets.
- **Right of residence:** In this case the beneficiary has the right to live in the property for a period of time stated in the deed (for example, until they marry), but can't benefit from it in any other way. In other words, if the beneficiary doesn't live in the property, they can't rent it out or gain any other financial benefit from it.
- **Infants' trusts:** These are for children under the age of 18, to pay for their everyday needs such as health care, food, clothing and education. In this type of trust the trustee's role is very involved: maintaining the trust, assessing the child's needs and ensuring the money is properly handled.

Quite often the trustee is given wide discretionary powers to pay out or advance money, because you can't always predict the needs of particular beneficiaries.

You normally specify in the trust document the age when you want your child to inherit the capital. If the trust is for several children, it may be broken up into smaller portions, so when each child reaches the age you've specified he or she can inherit their share, while the rest remains in trust for the younger children.

- **Incapable person's trust:** These are for beneficiaries who have an intellectual or severe physical disability and whose disability makes them unable to look after the money themselves, or for people who have difficulty managing money, to help them keep their finances in order.

As in the case of infants' trusts, the trustee is usually given wide powers, which is important because the beneficiary's needs may change over their lifetime.

Deed trusts

Deed or 'inter-vivos' trusts (which are established while the person setting up the trust is still alive) are more commonly established for tax purposes, and are often used by businesses and families to reduce the amount of tax they pay annually. But they are sometimes also used for beneficiaries in need. They include:

- **Non-estate proceeds trusts:** These are usually created when someone receives some sort of

payout, usually from life insurance, superannuation or even compensation.

- **Child support trusts:** These are subject to Family Law and are usually created when a family unit has split up and the children's interests need to be protected. They will, for example, ensure that money given for child support is spent on the child or children's needs only.

- **Family trusts:** These are normally discretionary, start during your life and continue for a specified period (quite often in excess of 20 or 30 years) and are not necessarily tied to one person's lifetime.

Your accountant, solicitor or trustee organisation can advise you of the pros and cons of using trusts for tax purposes, which is beyond the scope of this article.



example, if they are a young child or have an intellectual disability).

Ask a potential trustee if they're willing to act as a trustee before you name them.

How do you choose a trustee?

Keep in mind the points listed above, then consider whether you know someone who would be a good trustee, or whether you should appoint a public or private trustee organisation.

There are a number of advantages to choosing one of these organisations:

- They should be familiar with the law surrounding trusts, and are less likely to breach it unwittingly.
- They have experience in investing and maintaining trusts and looking after the interests of beneficiaries, whereas a lay trustee with little knowledge and experience may find the task difficult.

- They don't age, get sick, go on holiday, or become overwhelmed by or tired of managing a trust.
- They can be in a better position to make independent decisions on the needs of the beneficiary and are less likely to become involved in family politics.

A possible disadvantage of a public or private trustee organisation is that they can be more impersonal, which is why you may prefer to have a friend or family member as trustee. A lay trustee will probably be more familiar with the beneficiaries' needs too.

A compromise is to name a public or private trustee company as trustee, and a friend or family member as co-trustee. The company should work with this person towards the best interests of the beneficiary.

Private trustee organisations can be found in the Yellow Pages under 'Trusts' or 'Trustees'. See this

Shopping around

When shopping around for a solicitor or company to draw up a trust, ask about the companies' rates of return on trusts they have invested that are similar to yours. While what they've achieved in the past is no guarantee of what they'll do in the future, a record of success is encouraging. It's also important to compare fees, charges and services.

How much a trust costs to set up and maintain depends on which type of trust it is, how complicated it is, who is nominated trustee, the stamp duty in your state and capital gains tax implications.

Cost of setting up testamentary trusts

The terms of a testamentary trust are included in your will, so the set-up fee is incorporated into the cost of making the will. Getting a solicitor to write a will that includes the set-up of a testamentary trust could cost from \$150 to \$2000, depending on the law firm's charges and the amount of work involved in setting up the trust. So it's worth shopping around before selecting any one firm. Keep in mind that firms in city office blocks with high overheads may charge more than a suburban law firm. (For more information on writing wills, see CHOICE, February 1996.)

If you appoint a friend or family member as trustee, they may claim reimbursement for running costs, such as employing an accountant to keep the finances in order. They may also be paid for their work if you specifically state this in the trust document. If it's not in the document they can apply to the court for approval to be paid — especially if the trust is complex. Being a trustee can be a thankless and time-consuming task, especially for complicated trusts, so you may want to consider paying the trustee.

Public and private trustees

In some states, the public trustee won't charge for writing your will, as long as it is made executor, trustee or co-trustee. This is the case in NSW, SA and WA. The other states and territories charge a range of fees (which may be waived or reduced for pensioners), except in Queensland, where the public trustee will write your will free of charge without any obligation on your part to make it executor or trustee.

THE COST OF TRUSTS

Private trustee companies have various charges for writing a will incorporating a testamentary trust. Some won't charge at all, or may charge less if they are named executor, trustee or co-trustee (while others won't write your will at all unless they're named). Set-up charges are often between \$100 and \$1500, depending on whether the will is for one person or a couple.

If you name the company trustee or co-trustee, it will deduct a further charge from the trust's capital or income as payment for maintaining it.

Some charge an annual fee of between 1% and 1.5% on the capital, while others may charge a one-off fee on the capital plus an annual fee on the income. The one-off fee is based on a sliding scale and varies between companies.

So, it's worth shopping around to find the types of services offered and the lowest rates payable. You may need expert advice from an independent lawyer or accountant as to whether the charges negate the value of setting up a trust and what your other options are.

Cost of setting up deed trusts

Deed or 'inter-vivos' trusts generally cost more to establish than a testamentary trust. A solicitor may charge anything from \$300 to \$2000, again depending on the firm and how much work is involved.

Private trustee charges also vary according to the company and the trust's complexity, and could cost anything from \$250 to \$700 for the trust document (although some won't charge any fee if they're named trustee, and others won't establish the trust at all unless it's big enough — at least \$100,000 in assets).

An annual fee for trust maintenance then applies. This could be a set fee of around \$1000 per year, or between 0.5% and 1.5% of the value of the assets per year (depending on how much work is involved).

Thinking of everything

If the trust is to start or continue when you die, be careful to consider all possible beneficiaries.

Many people setting up a trust want it to benefit future generations (such as grandchildren), but because when you set up the trust some possible beneficiaries won't be part of the family—new grandchildren or spouses, for example—you will have to describe potential future beneficiaries. However, some possibilities are often overlooked, such as de facto spouses, children from de facto relationships, stepchildren and so on, which means if you're not careful when naming or describing the beneficiaries, you can unintentionally cause problems and arguments in the future.

Another issue to consider is the effect trust income is likely to have on beneficiaries who may claim a pension or other benefits. Some people can end up in a difficult position, as the amount of money they earn from the trust may mean they lose some of their pension and other benefits. In some cases they may even end up worse off overall. If the trustee has wide discretion in this case, he or she could distribute trust income to a dependant of the beneficiary (such as a child), as well as to the beneficiary, in order to reduce their assessable income.

Public trustee contact numbers

ACT: (06) 257 1222.
NSW: (02) 9252 0523.
NT: (08) 8999 7271.
Queensland:
(07) 3213 9288.
SA: (08) 8226 9200.
Tasmania:
Hobart
(03) 6233 7598.
Launceston
(03) 6336 2241.
Victoria:
(03) 9667 6444.
WA: (09) 222 6777.

page, top right, for contact details for the state public trustees.

How is a trustee appointed?

Trustees are formally appointed in several ways. The original trustee is normally appointed in the trust deed or will. To cover a situation where a change or replacement is required, it's not unusual for special provisions to be included in those documents, giving someone else the right to name a new trustee.

What are a trustee's duties?

The law is very protective of the beneficiary and the trust, and is specific about a trustee's duties. These are set down in each state's trustee act. They can also be set down in court decisions and in the deed itself.

Essentially, a trustee is obliged to look after a trust with the same amount of care and attention they should give their own business affairs.

The trustee should:

- Familiarise themselves with the trust's requirements and the laws surrounding trusts in general.
- Carry out the directions contained in the trust, unless the directions are illegal (or become illegal).
- Keep accurate accounts and keep the beneficiary fully informed and up-to-date.
- Invest the trust assets according to specifications in the trust and the law.
- Be impartial and objective when dealing with the beneficiary.
- Carry out the terms of the trust in person unless the deed or will gives them permission to delegate.

A trustee isn't normally allowed to have interests which conflict with those of the beneficiary. For example, if the trustee is selling a property from the

trust, they can't buy the property themselves, even if they are prepared to pay a fair price.

What are the beneficiary's rights?

Essentially, the beneficiary has the right to have the trust properly administered until they're entitled to their share.

As a result, beneficiaries also have the right to take legal action if they feel the trustee is neglecting the trust, or if they are unhappy about decisions made by the trustee. □





Advanced Per Se?

There's new competition for 35 mm photography — the Advanced Photo System (APS). Is it advanced enough to be a real improvement?

IN BRIEF

This article will tell you:

- Test results for 13 APS cameras priced between \$100 and \$1200 (pages 40 to 41).
- What new features APS has to offer (page 39).
- How do prices for APS film and processing compare to conventional 35 mm photography (page 40).
- Why you may want to wait a little longer before purchasing an APS camera (page 37).

THE BREAKTHROUGH IN PHOTOGRAPHY the world has been waiting for.
 "A system so simple it's destined to change the way people think about photography."

"Easier, better, higher-quality picture-taking."

These are statements some camera manufacturers used to introduce the Advanced Photo System or APS. Others simply contented themselves with praising their new products to the skies.

Much ado about nothing? What can you expect from the new system and how do the new cameras perform?

The new film

APS mainly revolves around a new type of film, which has one big disadvantage: it's not compatible with conventional 35 mm cameras. So if you want to use APS you'll have to buy a new camera as well.

Other than that:

- The new film is smaller than the 35 mm cartridges you're used to, allowing for more compact cameras.
- The film is completely contained in the cartridge and you'll never have to handle it. To load the film, you just drop the cartridge into the camera and close the flap — the camera takes care of the rest.
- After the negatives have been processed, they're stored safely inside the cartridge again. You'll get an 'index print' that shows numbered miniature versions of all the images on your film (see the photo on page 40). The film cartridge carries an identification number that's also found on the index print and on the back of each of the prints. So identifying a photo you want to reprint is very easy.
- The film carries a magnetic coating where the camera can store certain information. This, in turn, can be read by the processing equipment and is called 'information exchange' or 'iX' — see page 39 for more information.

Our test

Since APS cameras are all fairly new and available worldwide, we tested the cameras at a lab in England, together with some of our consumer magazine counterparts in Europe.

The 13 cameras tested are all available here, as are several other models now which were released too late to be included in this test.

Twelve of the models are compact (point-and-shoot) cameras, while the FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL is an SLR (single-lens-reflex). However, it doesn't feature changeable lenses and full manual selection of shutter speed and/or aperture settings — usually major advantages of SLRs over compact cameras.

How good are they?

The APS cameras in our test produced good-quality pictures and overall performed similarly to 35 mm cameras.

The smaller APS frame size of 16.7 x 30.2 mm (compared to the 24 x 36 mm of conventional film) means negatives have to be enlarged more if you want the same print size. This could potentially result in grainier photos. However, the APS components (film, camera and processing) work together to produce prints of similar quality to 35 mm photography.

A problem all the compact APS cameras shared was their poor viewfinder accuracy: the negative will capture more than you can see through the viewfinder. So subjects will turn out slightly smaller on the print than you'd expected, and you may find things appearing along the edges of the picture that you never intended to include.

The FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL didn't have this problem to the same extent because with SLR cameras the image in the viewfinder is sighted through the lens. However, at \$1200 this camera is much more expensive than the other APS models.

WHAT TO BUY

Autofocus, fixed focal length

KODAK Advantix 3600IX	\$320
KONICA Super Big Mini BM-S 100	\$300

Autofocus zoom

FUJIFILM Fotonex 300 Zoom	\$680
FUJIFILM Fotonex 250 Zoom	\$460

Autofocus zoom SLR

FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL	\$1200
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WHAT TO LOOK FOR...

The APS cameras tested look much the same as the 35 mm compact cameras you're used to. Also, your part in taking pictures is similar: they're basically point-and-shoot cameras — you press a button and the autofocus and programmed exposure settings of the camera do the rest.

So some decisions you'll have to make when shopping around for an APS model are the same as for a 35 mm camera; for example:

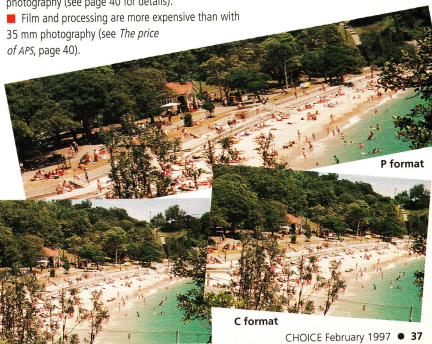
- Do you want to spend more for the better versatility of a zoom lens?
- Does a compact model offer enough or do you need the additional options of most SLR cameras (such as changeable lenses and full manual selection of shutter speed and/or aperture settings — which, however, weren't available on the SLR model in our test)?

...and why you might want to wait

Information exchange features on page 39 gives some idea of what a top-of-the-line APS camera should be able to do. However, there are several reasons why you may want to wait a little longer for the system to become more established before changing to APS:

- None of the cameras tested was able to take advantage of all the highly acclaimed advanced features.
- Although several additional models have been released since we purchased the cameras for our test, you still won't find the same range of choice as with 35 mm cameras.
- While you can still drop your film off at most local photo shops or chemists for processing, only relatively few of them are equipped with APS processing machines as yet. So at present it's likely your film will have to be sent to a lab with APS equipment. This means same-day service may be difficult to find.
- At the moment, you still don't have the same choice of film types, speeds and number of exposures as with 35 mm photography (see page 40 for details).
- Film and processing are more expensive than with 35 mm photography (see *The price of APS*, page 40).

You can choose from three print formats: 'C', which is of similar proportions to a normal 35 mm print; 'H', which is the same depth as 'C' but wider; and 'P' — panoramic. And if you change your mind later it's no problem — you can simply ask for a reprint in a different format.



PROFILES

Profiles are of the cameras in the *What to buy* list. Prices shown are a good target to aim for when shopping around, based on nationwide checks in November 1996. Anything lower is a bargain. **NOTE:** All the cameras in this test were 'compact' APS models except the **FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL**, which is an SLR (single-lens reflex).

Autofocus, fixed focal length



KODAK Advantix 3600iX

Target price: \$320

Good points

- Best picture quality of all the compact cameras tested.
- Convenient to use.
- Indicators for 'subject in focus', 'subject out of focus range' and 'subject out of flash range'.
- Very quick flash recycling time.

Bad points

- Limited IX features (see page 39).
- Relatively long delay between pressing the shutter release button and the shutter opening, which can make it difficult to catch a special moment.
- Poor maximum flash range.



KONICA Super Big Mini BM-S 100

Target price: \$300

Good points

- Good picture quality.
- Convenient to use.
- Indicators for 'subject in focus' and 'subject out of focus range'.
- Very quick flash recycling time.
- You can manually override automatic exposure settings.

Bad points

- Limited IX features.
- Long shutter delay.

Autofocus zoom



FUJIFILM Fotonex 300 Zoom

Target price: \$680

Good points

- Good overall picture quality — but see *Bad points* for one weaker area.
- Equal best for convenience.
- Most versatile of all the compact cameras.
- Good range of IX features.
- Indicators for 'subject in focus' and 'subject out of focus range'.
- Dioptic eyepiece adjustment may enable some people to use the viewfinder without their glasses.
- Extra-close-up ability.
- Cableless infrared remote operation available as an option at extra cost.

Bad points

- Only 'satisfactory' optical quality, which was a component of the score for picture quality (it didn't score well for distortion).
- Poor maximum flash range.



FUJIFILM Fotonex 250 Zoom

Target price: \$460

Good points

- Good picture quality.
- Convenient to use.
- Good range of IX features.
- Indicators for 'subject in focus' and 'subject out of focus range'.
- Cableless infrared remote operation available as an option at extra cost.

Bad points

- Poor maximum flash range.

Autofocus zoom SLR



FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000SL

Target price: \$1200

Good points

- Best picture quality in the test — but see *Bad points* for one weaker area.
- Highest versatility score (see table note 6 on page 41 for details).
- Equal best for convenience.
- Best viewfinder accuracy.
- You can manually override automatic exposure settings.
- Cableless infrared remote operation available as an option at extra cost.
- Dioptic eyepiece adjustment.
- Indicators for 'subject in focus', 'subject out of focus range' and 'flash ready'.
- Good range of IX features.
- Extra-close-up ability.
- Very quick flash recycling time.

Bad points

- Lacks two big advantages SLRs usually have over compact cameras: changeable lenses and full manual selection of shutter speed and/or aperture settings.
- Didn't score well for distortion in the 'optical quality' part of the picture quality assessment.
- Inconvenient lens protection (unsecured lens cap).
- Heaviest and bulkiest camera tested.
- Poor autofocus performance when subject is poorly lit.

Information exchange features

None of the cameras in our test takes full advantage of all the potential IX-features yet (see the table, right). However, a few more camera models are now on the market, so it may be worth searching for the following features when shopping around (see also *What to look for on page 37*).

1 Three picture formats

A switch on the camera allows you to select one of three picture formats for each photo you take (see page 37). You'll see the chosen format in the viewfinder and the camera will store your selection on the magnetic data strip, where it can be read by the processing equipment.

However, the camera always exposes the whole frame (which is the H-format — see below), and when you order reprints you can choose whichever format you want — no matter what you selected when taking the photo.

Your options are:

■ **'C'** (for 'classic') format, with the same print size ratio of 2:3 between height and width you're used to from 35 mm photography.

■ **'H'** format, which stands for 'HDTV' or 'high-definition TV'. It gives you prints with a ratio of 9:16 — the same as a wide-screen TV (so it might have been better named 'W').

■ **'P'** (for 'panoramic') format, with a print ratio of around 1:3. The 'P' format negative in fact has the same width as the 'H' format, with the top and bottom cut off. The prints are then merely enlarged more.

2 Date and time print on back

Most cameras automatically record the date and time the picture was taken on the film's data strip. This is then printed on the back of the photo.

3 Title print on back

More advanced cameras also allow you to select a preprogrammed message or title such as 'birthday', 'holiday' or 'I love you', which will be stored on the magnetic data strip and then printed on the back of the photo. In addition, the processing machine will always print information such as film identification, frame and minilab identification numbers on the back of the photo.

4 Print quantity

Some cameras let you record the number of copies you'd like to have of a picture immediately after you've taken it (for example, you can 'order'

Brand / model

Brand / model	1 Three picture formats	2 Date and time print on back	3 Title print on back	4 Print quantity	5 Print cancel	6 Fixed-time printing	7 Mid-roll film change
FUJIFILM Fotonex 10	✓						
KODAK Advantix 3600IX	✓	✓					
KONICA Super Big Mini BM-S 100	✓	✓	✓				
FUJIFILM Fotonex 100	✓	✓					
NIKON Nuvis Mini i	✓	✓					
YASHICA Acclaim 100	✓	✓					
KODAK Advantix 3100 AF	✓						
FUJIFILM Fotonex 300 Zoom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
FUJIFILM Fotonex 250 Zoom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
KODAK Advantix 4100IX Zoom	✓	✓					
KONICA Super Big Mini Zoom BM-S 630 Z	✓	✓					
YASHICA Acclaim Zoom 200	✓	✓					
FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

five prints if you've taken a shot of four friends and already know each of you wants to get a copy). The processing machine automatically prints the requested number — for the price of first prints rather than reprints (see *The price of APS on page 40*).

5 Print cancel

On some cameras you can also select 'zero' as print quantity, which can be handy if you know a picture won't turn out or you don't want it printed (for example, if you've pressed the button accidentally). You'll still have wasted a frame — but you won't have to pay for the processing of a print you don't want.

6 Fixed-time printing

Most cameras have a feature called 'Print quality improvement' (PQI) which automatically records information about the conditions each picture is taken in, such as lighting (artificial light, use of flash), exposure settings or magnification. The processing equipment reads this information and adjusts the printing parameters (such as colour tones) accordingly. This supposedly leads to better-quality prints.

However, the cameras use this feature to varying degrees, so ask the salesperson how advanced a model is before you buy.

The disadvantage of PQI: In some situations you want to capture a certain mood or particular lighting condition (such as a sunset) without the lab 'correcting' it. Then you need to override PQI

— a feature called 'fixed-time printing'.

Unfortunately, you couldn't do this with any of the tested models.

7 Mid-roll film change

In theory, you can remove and reload a partially exposed APS film, for example if you want to switch between different film speeds mid-roll. This can be a very handy feature. However, none of the cameras in the test supported it — you'll have to look for it in newer models.

On new top-of-the-range models with this feature, the camera will automatically wind the reloaded film to the next unexposed frame, so you won't have to worry about re-exposing an already used frame. You can keep track of the current state of a film via an indicator that tells you whether the film is unexposed, partially exposed, fully exposed but unprocessed or processed (see the photo on page 40).

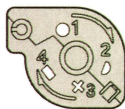


'Advanced' switches and buttons: an example of an APS control panel.

Brand / model	Manufacturer / distributor	Origin	Warranty (years)	Target price (\$)*	Weight (g)	Dimensions (L x H x D, mm)	Focal length (mm)	Max aperture (f-n)
FIXED FOCUS								
FUJIFILM Fotonex 10	Fuji / Hanimex	Indonesia	1	100	160	120 x 63 x 35	23	8.0
AUTOFOCUS, FIXED FOCAL LENGTH (in rank order)								
KODAK Advantix 3600IX	Eastman Kodak	Mexico	1	320	190	119 x 65 x 35	24	3.6
KONICA Super Big Mini BM-S 100	Konica	China	3	300	177	103 x 57 x 30	28	3.5
FUJIFILM Fotonex 100	Fuji / Hanimex	Indonesia	1	340	164	106 x 58 x 31	25	4.0
NIKON Nuvi Mini i	Nikon	Indonesia	3	290	159	104 x 58 x 30	25	4.0
YASHICA Acclaim 100	Kyocera / Tasco	Philippines (A)	5	310	167	105 x 59 x 32	25	4.0
KODAK Advantix 3100 AF	Eastman Kodak	Mexico	1	240	179	119 x 64 x 41	25	4.6
AUTOFOCUS ZOOM (in rank order)								
FUJIFILM Fotonex 300 Zoom	Fuji / Hanimex	Japan	1	680	258	120 x 68 x 41	30-90	4.5-
FUJIFILM Fotonex 250 Zoom	Fuji / Hanimex	Indonesia	1	460	234	121 x 68 x 35	25-55	5.0-
KODAK Advantix 4100IX Zoom	Eastman Kodak	Indonesia	1	360	144	123 x 64 x 41	30-60	4.5-
KONICA Super Big Mini Zoom BM-S 630 Z	Konica	Indonesia	3	380	217	115 x 61 x 42	30-60	4.5-
YASHICA Acclaim Zoom 200	Kyocera / Tasco	Philippines (A)	5	360	234	115 x 62 x 41	30-60	4.5-
AUTOFOCUS ZOOM SLR								
FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL	Fuji / Hanimex	Japan	1	1200	546	119 x 82 x 115	25-100	4.5-

* Prices shown are a good target to aim for when shopping around, based on nationwide checks in November 1996. Anything lower is a bargain.

(A) Some parts from Japan.



○ Unexposed film

✕ Fully exposed but not processed

◐ Partially exposed film

◑ Processed film inside cartridge

The film status indicator on APS film cartridges shows you whether the film is unexposed (1), partially exposed (2), fully exposed but not processed (3) or processed (4).



With APS you'll never have to handle negatives again — they're safely contained inside the cartridge. Instead, the lab will provide you with an index print showing miniature versions of all the photos on your film.

The price of APS

APS cameras and films aren't compatible with conventional 35 mm photography. So if you want the new features you'll need a new camera and you'll have to buy APS film and have it processed through APS processing outlets.

While prices for both APS and 35 mm compact cameras range from \$100 or less upwards, film and processing costs are currently considerably higher than with 35 mm photography.

■ **Film:** As APS is still fairly new, film manufacturers haven't introduced to Australia the full range of film types and speeds and the full choice of exposures per roll that will eventually be available (for example, slide and black-and-white films aren't available here yet).

At present you can get colour print ISO 200 film with 15 (\$6-7), 25 (\$7-8) and 40 (\$10-11) exposures, as well as 25-exposure ISO 100 (\$8-9) and ISO 400 (\$8-9) film. This is more expensive than equivalent 35 mm film — which, however, gives you fewer exposures per roll (12, 24 or 36).

■ **Processing:** Developing the negatives plus producing the index print usually costs \$5. In addition you'll have to pay for each print, depending on the format: first prints are around 30 cents each for 'C'-prints, 30 to 35 cents for the 'H'-size and 55 to 80 cents for the 'P'-format. Reprints cost about \$1 for 'C'- and 'H'-sizes and \$2 for the 'P'-format.

At the time of writing, only about 60-70 processing labs in Australia had APS equipment and your local photo shop or chemist will probably have to send the film away to one of these. So an overnight processing service may be the fastest you can get. However, according to manufacturers, more and more labs will receive the new processing equipment during the next few months.

3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Film speed range (ISO)	Red-eye reduction	Picture quality score (%)	Versatility score (%)	Convenience score (%)	Construction score (%)	Overall score (%)	Brand / model	
100-400		66	13	49	100	52	FUJIFILM Fotonex 10	
25-1600	✓	77	41	70	100	69	KODAK Advantix 3600IX	
25-3200	✓	67	52	70	100	67	KONICA Super Big Mini BM-S 100	
100-400	✓	74	32	61	100	63	FUJIFILM Fotonex 100	
100-800	✓	65	34	64	100	61	NIKON Nuvis Mini i	
100-800	✓	65	34	61	100	60	YASHICA Acclaim 100	
100-800		65	17	61	100	56	KODAK Advantix 3100 AF	
25-3200	✓	70	57	75	100	71	FUJIFILM Fotonex 300 Zoom	
25-3200	✓	73	48	69	100	68	FUJIFILM Fotonex 250 Zoom	
50-1600	✓	63	45	61	100	62	KODAK Advantix 4100IX Zoom	
50-1600	✓	66	47	57	100	62	KONICA Super Big Mini Zoom BM-S 630 Z	equal
50-1600	✓	66	43	58	100	62	YASHICA Acclaim Zoom 200	
25-3200	✓	82	62	75	100	77	FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL	

1 Focal length

The smaller the number, the wider the angle of view and the more of the subject you can fit into your picture. Higher focal lengths narrow the angle and make a distant subject appear closer. Zoom lenses allow you to vary the focal length and give you much more versatility in fitting a subject into your photo.

As the size of APS film frames is smaller than in 35 mm photography, the image size of a subject at the same focal length is also different. To compare the focal lengths of the two systems, divide the APS focal length by 0.8 (for example, 24 mm in APS equals 30 mm in conventional cameras).

2 Maximum aperture (f-number)

The aperture is the adjustable opening which lets light into the camera. Its width is measured in f-numbers: the lower the number, the wider the aperture and the more light will reach your film. (The numbers in the table are actual measurements and may be different from the f-stops you're used to if you have an SLR camera.) For zoom cameras the first number refers to the maximum aperture setting at the lowest focal length, the second to the maximum setting at the highest (see table note 1).

Of all the cameras tested, only the **KONICA Super Big Mini BM-S 100** and the **FUJIFILM Fotonex 4000 SL** allow you to correct their programmed exposure settings to a limited extent (a feature called "exposure override"). With all the other models you can't have any influence on the settings at all.

3 Film speed range

This column tells you to which film speeds the camera can adjust. The higher the ISO number, the more light-sensitive the film is, allowing you to capture fast-moving objects or to take pictures in poor light. However, at the time of writing APS film was available in Australia only in ISO 100, 200 and 400.

4 Red-eye reduction

If the flash is located close to the lens (as most built-in flashes are) people being flash-photographed may end up with glowing red eyes. A tick in this column indicates the camera uses some method of reducing the red-eye effect.

5 Picture quality score

To assess the picture quality the following factors were included in the test:

- Optical quality (for example, picture sharpness or distortion of straight lines).
- Exposure accuracy.
- Focus accuracy.
- Red-eye reduction (see table note 4).
- Viewfinder accuracy (is what you see through the viewfinder what you'll actually get on the picture?).
- Flash uniformity (does the flash illuminate all parts of the picture evenly?).

6 Versatility score

To assess the versatility of the cameras the following factors were included in the test:

- Focal length range (see table note 1).
- Close-up ability.

- Exposure override (whether you can adjust the camera's automatic settings).
- Shutter delay (the time between operating the shutter release button and the camera opening the shutter).
- Film speed range (see table note 3).
- Maximum flash range.
- Effectiveness of the autofocus (if applicable).
- Shutter speed range.

7 Convenience score

To find out how convenient the cameras are, the following factors were included in the assessment:

- Instruction manuals.
- Ease of loading film.
- Lens protection.
- Ease of adjusting the focal length (where applicable).
- Flash battery life.

8 Construction score

To assess how well constructed the cameras are — and therefore how robust they're likely to be — we searched for manufacturing faults and carried out an impact test. All the cameras scored 100% for this.

9 Overall score

The overall score is a combination of picture quality, versatility, convenience and construction, weighted as follows:

- Picture quality: 40%
- Versatility: 25%
- Convenience: 25%
- Construction: 10%

The best thing since sliced bread?

We tested 16 toasters designed to fit thick bread, and none of them was ideal. What does it take to get a good slice of toast?

LET'S FACE IT. WHEN YOU BUY A toaster, you simply want something that will toast your bread evenly without any hassles. Yet half the toasters tested ended up in our 'Not recommended' list.

Why? Six of the eight can't be recommended because they couldn't even manage to score 50% for basic toasting tasks, while the other two have excessively hot surface temperatures — hot enough to burn if you accidentally touch them.

Part of our test: can a toaster keep producing toast the colour you want it, time after time?



The eight toasters that didn't have these problems were able to consistently toast two slices of bread evenly on both sides, and to various degrees of brownness — from lightly toasted to well done. They also stayed cool enough to be touched at least briefly without burning you.

More than just toast

Because more and more people are toasting breads other than precut sandwich loaves, we tested toasters with wide or variable-width slots, which are designed to fit muffins, crumpets and breads of different thicknesses.

All the toasters could fit two slices of normal sliced bread — either in two slots or a single long slot.

WHAT TO BUY

SPEEDIE ST58	BEST BUY	\$30
KAMBROOK KT91	BEST BUY	\$30
SUNBEAM TA115		\$57

Tried, but not as true

These five toasters scored more than 50% for toasting performance, so they're adequate for their job, but four of them couldn't manage to get a rating of 'good' for two or more of the toasting performance criteria: evenness of browning, range of brownness (so you can have your toast from light brown to almost black) and ability to toast just one slice evenly. And two had fairly high surface temperatures. So while they're not as bad as our 'not recommended' group, they're not such a good buy as the three in our *What to buy* list.

Clockwise from left: the **BLACK & DECKER ET65**, **TEFAL 8415**, **KENWOOD TT350**, **RUSSELL HOBBS 9206** and the **SUNBEAM TA200**.



PROFILES



SPEEDIE ST58

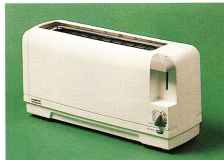
Price: \$30

Good points

- Produces evenly toasted bread.
- Cool-wall design reduces the chance of accidental burns.
- Easy pull-out tray for crumbs.
- Easy to clean.
- Single long slot with a self-centring mechanism, which means a grille holds the toast in the centre of the variable-width toasting slot for even browning.
- Room for cord storage.

Bad points

- Markings on the knob for controlling brownness are difficult to see.



KAMBROOK KT91

Price: \$30

Good points

- Produces evenly toasted bread.
- Plug features a built-in safety switch, to protect against electrical faults and electrocution.
- Cool-wall design reduces the chance of accidental burns.
- Easy pull-out tray for crumbs.
- Easy to clean.
- Single long slot with self-centring mechanism.
- Room for cord storage.

Bad points

- Brownness controls not clearly marked.



SUNBEAM TA115

Price: \$57

Good points

- Cool-wall design reduces the chance of accidental burns.
- Easy pull-out tray for crumbs.
- Easy to clean.
- Self-centring mechanism.
- Has a high-lift carriage lever, making it easier to remove small toasted items.
- Room for cord storage.

Bad points

- Toasts bread slightly unevenly.
- Brownness controls are not clearly marked.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Look for toasters with cool-touch walls.

These should maintain the outside of the toaster at a safe temperature.

■ **Variable-width slots** with 'self-centring', where grilles hold your bread, crumpet or whatever centred for even toasting.

■ Toasters with **cord storage** in the base are practical, as they keep your bench tidy and reduce the risk of the cord becoming tangled in something or being pulled by a child.

■ If you like toasting breads other than regular sandwich loaf, a **single long-slot** toaster may be the most practical choice. It still fits two slices of conventional bread, or can comfortably take a slice of high-top bread placed on its side. The **RUSSELL HOBBS 9206** was the only two-slot toaster in our test that could toast high-top bread slices.

■ A new feature appearing on the market is a **warming rack**, which stands above the toaster and can be used to warm scones, buns, rolls and croissants, or keep toast warm.

■ Conventional toasters generally use a heated wire element wrapped around an insulated board, but the alternative is a **quartz tube element**. This is a tube which encases the element, decreasing the chance of electrocution or crumbs catching alight. However, in our test they didn't toast bread well — three toasters featuring this kind of element produced toast with both burnt and uncooked patches on the same side of the slice, so we couldn't recommend them. They were the **SUNBEAM TA155** and **TA170**, and the **LINDA TL51**.

■ While some of the toasters tested have **frozen-bread** settings, we found they weren't very useful. The switch simply lengthens the amount of time the bread is toasted, but it can't cater for all bread types and thicknesses, and it doesn't take into consideration the temperature or moisture content of the frozen bread. It's just as effective to increase the toasting time with the browning knob.

■ Some of the toasters have a **defrost only** or **reheat** setting, which operates for a short time to heat up or defrost the bread, but not toast it. Don't pay extra for this feature — turning the toaster down to the lowest setting can often be just as effective.

TOASTERS

equal	Brand / model (in rank order)	Manufacturer / distributor	Origin	Target price (\$)	Warranty (years)	1 2 3 4			
						Long slot	Fits high-top bread	Toast speed	Evenness of browning
	SPEEDIE ST58	MEC-Kambrook	China	30	1	✓	✓	Good	Good
	KAMBROOK KT91 (A)	MEC-Kambrook	China	30	1	✓	✓	Good	Good
	SUNBEAM TA115	Sunbeam	China	57	1			Good	OK
	SUNBEAM TA200	Sunbeam	China	75	1			Good	OK
	BLACK & DECKER ET65 (B)	Black & Decker	China	50	1			OK	OK
	RUSSELL HOBBS 9206	Asko Appliances	China	70	1		✓ (E)	Poor	OK
	TEFAL 8415	Zyliss	China	40	1			OK	OK
	KENWOOD TT350	Breville	China	70	1			Good	OK
NOT RECOMMENDED (in alphabetical order)									
	BLACK & DECKER ET30	Black & Decker	China	30	2			Good	Poor
	BLACK & DECKER ET90	Black & Decker	China	70	2			Good	OK
	BREVILLE BT260 (C)	Breville	China	40	1	✓	✓	OK	Good
	BREVILLE BT550	Breville	China	40	1			Good	Poor
	BREVILLE BT800	Breville	China	38	1	✓	✓	Good	Poor
	LINDA TL51	Linda Electric	China	30	1	✓	✓	Good	Poor
	SUNBEAM TA155	Sunbeam	Australia	50	1 (D)	✓	✓	Good	Poor
	SUNBEAM TA170	Sunbeam	Australia	70	1 (D)	✓	✓	Good	Poor

For people with disabilities

An occupational therapist from the Independent Living Centre assessed the toasters for ease of use by people with a disability. Some features worth looking for are:

- The knob for controlling toasting colour should be easy to read, preferably with well defined colours. It should have a large grip requiring little pressure to operate with one hand or fingertips.

- The lever for lowering the toast should be large, easy to grip and require little pressure. It shouldn't be recessed or flush with the toaster's body. A contrasting colour makes it easier to see.

- Crumbs should be easy to remove and it should be possible to remove them with one hand — for example, a pull-out tray.

Of the toasters that passed our tests, the following may be easier for a person with a disability to use: **SPEEDIE ST58, KAMBROOK KT91, SUNBEAM TA115, SUNBEAM TA200, KENWOOD TT350.**

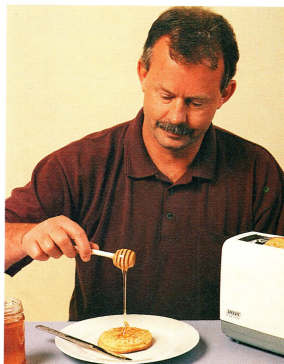
TOASTING CRUMPETS

Toasting crumpets to perfection in a toaster isn't easy — getting the top to toast without the bottom burning can be an art in itself. None of the toasters we tested could do it well — not even the **SUNBEAM TA170**, which has a crumpet-toasting switch.

This switch is designed to boost heat to the top of the crumpet, which takes longer to cook than the bottom. But the end result in our test was crumpets partially underdone and partially overdone — on the same side.

If you have a toaster with variable-width toasting slots — where the bread or crumpet is clamped in the centre of the slot — you may find lowering the crumpets into the toaster slowly helps stop the grille clamping the crumpet before it has been fully lowered.

All in all, it's probably easier to toast crumpets under your grill — at least then you can toast each side to your preferred level of brownness. If you really want to use your toaster for crumpets and you have a two-slot toaster, try toasting one crumpet at a time with the top (bubbly) side facing the empty slot. You may need to turn the control knob up high, or even put the crumpet through two cycles — either way, watch it carefully for signs of burning.



5

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Range of browning	Cool wall	Toaster surface temperature	Toasting score (%)	Ease of use score (%)	Overall score (%)	Brand / model (in rank order)
Good	✓	Pass	80	69	77	SPEEDIE ST58
Good	✓	Pass	80	61	74	KAMBROOK KT91 (A)
Good	✓	Pass	66	69	67	SUNBEAM TA115
Good		Borderline	66	62	65	SUNBEAM TA200
OK	✓	Pass	60	65	62	BLACK & DECKER ET65 (B)
OK	✓	Borderline	60	58	59	RUSSELL HOBBS 9206
OK	✓	Pass	60	58	59	TEFAL 8415
Good	✓	Pass	56	59	57	KENWOOD TT350
						Not recommended
Good	✓	Pass	41	74	51	BLACK & DECKER ET30
Good		Fail	56	49	54	BLACK & DECKER ET90
OK		Fail	78	61	73	BREVILLE BT260 (C)
OK	✓	Pass	33	76	46	BREVILLE BT550
Good	✓	Pass	45	72	53	BREVILLE BT800
Poor		Pass	40	46	42	LINDA TL51
Good	✓	Borderline	45	74	54	SUNBEAM TA155
Good	✓	Borderline	45	70	53	SUNBEAM TA170

(A) Since out test Kambrook has changed the markings on the control knob, which may affect ease of use.

(B) Will also be available in black as ET65B.

(C) Was discontinued in January 1997, but may still be found in shops.

(D) Five years on quartz element.

(E) Can fit two slices of high-top bread; all the others with a tick fit only one at a time.

Eight of the toasters on test are not recommended, either because they reached too high a temperature on the outside while toasting (see table note 6), or because they scored less than 50% for toasting performance.

1 Long slot

While conventional toasters feature two short slots, these have a long single slot that can fit two slices of bread or one slice of a high-top bread on its side.

2 Toaster speed

A toaster that could toast an average slice of bread in under two and a half minutes is rated as good. Between two and a half and three and a half minutes is OK. Any longer than this and it's rated poor.

3 Evenness of browning

The toasters were rated according to whether they could consistently toast slices of bread evenly on both sides with no burnt or uncooked patches, over several consecutive runs.

4 Single slice

Looking at the other usage extreme, the toasters were assessed for how well they toasted just one slice of bread. In general, single long-slot toasters in this test were more likely to evenly toast both sides of a single slice than a two-slot toaster.

5 Range of browning

Some people prefer their bread lightly toasted, others like it practically black. Also, different breads and food types (such as crumpets and fruit breads) require different amounts of toasting time. We assessed the range of browning each toaster could produce.

6 Cool wall/toaster surface temperature

Toasters promoted as having cool walls should be cool enough to touch at least briefly while they're working — which means no more than 68°C, otherwise you risk being burnt.

Two toasters had exceedingly hot outer walls after using them five times in quick succession (both were over 120°C), so were marked 'fail'

and are therefore not recommended. Four failed only marginally (just over 70°C) and were regarded as 'borderline'.

7 Toasting score

This incorporates evenness of browning (70%), single slice (20%), and range of browning (10%) ratings.

8 Ease of use score

How easy the toasters are to use depends on three factors: how easy it is to read and operate the browning control knob, to clean the exterior and to remove crumbs from the interior.

9 Overall score

The overall score was calculated as follows:

- Toasting score: 70%
- Ease of use: 30%

THE PRODUCT: Philip Morris has recalled all lighters sold in a cardboard sleeve with a packet of either Peter Jackson 30s or Marlboro 25s cigarettes since November 1, 1996. The lighters have either a capital P inside a diamond and oval-shaped motif, or a capital M inside a circle, with 'Big Country' written across it.

The problem: A number of these lighters may fail to extinguish and may constitute a serious safety risk.

What to do: Stop using the lighter. It must not be sent in the mail. For further information about what to do, contact the Customer Services Department on 1800 84 433.

THE PRODUCT: Riviana Foods has recalled Admiral brand Bamboo Shoots, 230 g, distributed through retail stores in NSW and the ACT. All affected cans have a code beginning with GABSL G0 and one of the following numbers: 628, 629, 710, 712, 713, 718, 719, 720, 815 (for example, GABSL G0628).

The problem: The above cans may be faulty.

What to do: Do not open or eat the contents of any can with the above codes. Return it immediately to the place of purchase for a full refund. For further information, contact Riviana Foods on (02) 9757 4722 or (03) 9764 3622.

THE PRODUCT: Ramset Fasteners (Aust) has recalled Powder Actuated Tools, model no. TS 750P, released on the market from May 1996, within the serial number range 037204 to 040622 inclusive.

The problem: In certain circumstances, when cycling the barrel, the tool may accidentally discharge. If the barrel contains a fastener in this situation it could become a lethal projectile.

What to do: If you have a tool within the above serial number range, stop using it immediately. To have it modified, contact Ramset on 1800 335 830.

THE PRODUCT: Ford Motor Company (Aust) has recalled Maverick Wagon and Hardtop model cars with coil spring suspension built between July 1991 and September 1993, within the following VIN range and models: JN1AA00KY60 13299 to 13893 and 15003 to 18668 (petrol hardtop).

JN1AA00KY60 13299 to 13893 and 15003 to 18668 (diesel hardtop).

JN1AA00WY60 13299 to 13893 and 15003 to 18668 (petrol wagon).

JN1AA00WY60 13299 to 13893 and 15003 to 18668 (diesel wagon).

The VIN and build date of the vehicle are stamped on an ID plate fixed onto the engine firewall panel at the rear of the engine compartment.

The problem: Certain conditions could result in fluid leakage from the front brake hoses and consequent loss of braking effectiveness.

What to do: Arrange for the problem to be rectified through an authorised Ford dealer. Until then, drive with caution and at moderate speed on and off-road. Contact your local Ford dealer for more information or the Ford Customer Assistance Centre on 1800 333 306.

THE PRODUCT: Compaq has recalled certain AC adaptors supplied with:

■ Armada 4100 Series notebook computers with serial numbers up to and including x647xxxxxx;

■ Ethernet Convenience Base, Option Part Numbers: 217927-001, -011, -021, and -031.

■ Pass through Convenience Base, Option Part Numbers: 217928-001, -011, -021, and -031.

■ AC Adaptor Option Kit, Option Part Numbers: 217931-001 and -002.

■ AC Adaptor Spare Part Kit, Spare Part Number: 246960-001.

The affected AC adaptor has three hollow pins at the AC-in connector and part numbers 217984-001 or 217931-001 or 217931-002 on the barcode label, and was shipped from September 1996.

The problem: The AC adaptor may have a faulty male connector pin which may break off and lodge in the female connector of the power cord, potentially causing an electric shock to the user.

What to do: Contact Compaq or an authorised Compaq service provider to arrange for a free replacement. Phone 1800 636 800 or (02) 9911 1955 (weekdays).

THE PRODUCT: Toyota Motor Corporation Australia has recalled all VR and T4 series Lexcens fitted with towbars and produced from July 1993 to October 1996, with the following VIN:

VDS	Frame numbers	
	From	To
VR Lexcen VRK19H	PT645621	S7807354
models	VRK19H	PT645621 S7807354
	VRK19H	PT645621 S7807354
	VRK35H	PT645621 S7807354
	VRK35H	PT645621 S7807354
T4 Lexcen T4K19H	PT807423	V7979936
models	T4L19H	S7807423 V7979936
	T4K19H	S7807423 V7979936
	T4K35H	S7807423 V7979936
	T4L35H	S7807423 V7979936

The problem: Under certain conditions during towing, overheated transmission fluid may discharge from the breather tube and/or dipstick tube. If it comes into contact with hot engine components, it may ignite.

What to do: If you have not already been contacted, ring your local Toyota dealer for rectification to be carried out immediately. Owners of cars without a towbar will be contacted in February and March to have this work carried out, in case the owner wishes to use a towbar in the future. For further information, contact 1800 643 242 (weekdays).

THE PRODUCT: Nissan Motor Company (Aust) has recalled the following Y60 Patrol vehicles with coil spring suspension (wagon, hardtop and coil cab-chassis), manufactured between July 1991 and October 1996:

JN100KY60A0028876 to 500037

(hardtop/petrol).

JN100KY60A0028876 to 500030

(hardtop/diesel).

JN100WY60A0028876 to 560388

(wagon/TB42/petrol).

JN1WRGY60A0028876 to 560564

(wagon/diesel).

JN1WYGY60A0028876 to 560117

(wagon/RB30/petrol).

JN1WYGY60A0510001 to 561108

(wagon/turbo/diesel).

JN100NY60A0000101 to 003095

(coil cab-chassis/petrol).

JN100NY60A00000101 to 009568

(coil cab-chassis/diesel).

The manufacturing month and the VIN are stamped on a plate on the firewall panel at the rear of the engine compartment.

The problem: Certain conditions could result in fluid leakage from the front brake hose and consequent loss of braking effectiveness.

What to do: If you haven't already been contacted, call an authorised Nissan dealer to have the problem rectified as soon as possible. Until then, drive with caution. For further information contact the Nissan Customer Assistance Centre on 1800 035 035.

THE PRODUCT: Safeway

Supermarket Fountain Gate (Narre Warren) has recalled a number of fresh milk products in cardboard cartons, sold from the milk case of the above store only on Thursday, November 21, Friday,

November 22 and Saturday, November 23, 1996.

The problem: Milk coolroom cleaning caused the milk to carry an odour, but it's not a health risk.

What to do: If you bought milk in a carton from this store on the above dates and froze it, don't consume it. Return it to the above store for a refund. For further information contact (03) 9263 2469 or (03) 9263 2539.

THE PRODUCT: Modern Teaching Aids has recalled the Ambi Toys Roly Poly Clown E295, on sale since 1995.

The problem: The arm may separate from the main body of the toy and pose an ingestion hazard for children under three years of age.

What to do: Stop using the product and return it to Modern Teaching Aids or the store of purchase. Refunds will be available for 12 months. For further information, contact the Product Recall Co-ordinator on (02) 9939 2355 or 1800 251 497.

THE PRODUCT: Bonlac Foods has recalled Jelly Cup Raspberry, 150 g container, use-by date: 02 APR 1997.

The problem: The product may have an off flavour and odour.

What to do: Don't eat it. Return it to the place of purchase for a full refund.

THE PRODUCT: Mitsubishi Motors Australia has recalled a number of FE3, FE4, FG4 Canter and FH100 trucks. Vehicles affected have the following body numbers:

HEALTH WARNING

THE PRODUCT: Coles and Bi-Lo supermarkets are warning customers about mislabelling of Farmland or Bi-Lo brand Mud Cake or Alpine Mud Cake, bought at their Victorian or Albury supermarkets.

The problem: The products weren't correctly labelled as they don't mention that eggs were used in them.

What to do: If you have an allergy to eggs, don't eat the product and return it to the place of purchase for a refund. For further information, contact 1800 061 562.

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Model	Body No. From	To
FE339B	060197	061254
FE339BD (CBU)	060227	060242
FE339E	060074	060103
FE439C	061096	061281
FE449CD (CBU)	060240	060315
FE449E	067832	068949
FE449W	067851	069057
FE449FS	065012	065776
FG439C	060446	060577
FG439C	060667	
FG439CZ	060434	060589
FG439WZ	060200	060265
FH100GS	031687	031891
FH100HS	032732	033053

(Note: not all vehicles in these ranges are affected.)

The problem: The affected vehicle's parking brake lever may not remain in the applied position when the lever is pulled in to apply the park brake.

What to do: When parking, check the rear wheels at the front and back. If you haven't received a letter, call your nearest Mitsubishi Motors Truck Dealer for replacement of the parking brake lever assembly if required. For more information, contact:
Queensland: (07) 3368 5702
NSW: (02) 9797 3850
Victoria and Tasmania: (03) 9895 3602
SA, NT, WA: (08) 2875 6951.

THE PRODUCT: Cigweld has recalled the **Cigweld Transmig Brumby 180**, sold between June and December 1996, with a serial number from 96060000 to 96124162.

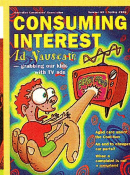
The problem: There may be a problem in the wiring circuit, which could result in electric shock.

What to do: Don't use the machine until it has been inspected and modified, if necessary, by an accredited Cigweld service agent. For the address of your nearest agent, call Robert Ken on 1800 629 810 or (03) 9487 1393, or write to Cornwell Group P/L, 85 Chiffley Drive, Preston 3072.

THE PRODUCT: Carter Wallace has recalled **Trojan Form-Fitting Condoms**, in packs of three and 12, batch number L1155, expiry 11-96.

The problem: The batch failed to comply with the Australian standard.

What to do: Don't use the product. Return it to: Reply paid, Permit No. 0149, Carter-Wallace (Australia Pty Ltd), PO Box 216, Brookvale 2100, with your name and address. A refund or replacement will be mailed to you free of charge. For further information, contact 1800 222 099 or (02) 9452 5233.



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Twelve-month INDEX

March 1996 — February 1997

HOW TO USE THIS INDEX

Bold type indicates a test report, normal type indicates other articles.
* indicates an update of a previous report, additions or corrections to reports, small follow-up items or letters
For space reasons, the Index generally doesn't include Choice Cuts, many other small pieces and Recalls and Bans.

Adding value to your home
Alarm systems, home
Answering machines

Banks
'basic' accounts
EFTPOS charges
Bathroom renovations
Beta-carotene
Buying guide, annual

Camcorders
Cameras
APS
digital
Carpet cleaning
Cars
airbags
cost of owning
jacks, safety
reliability
security
spare parts
steering locks
tyres, recycling
CD players, multi-disc
CD-ROM encyclopaedias
Champagne and sparkling wines
Children
cots
immunisation
CHOICE, questions answered
Circular saws
Cold and flu treatments
Computers
basics
buying a new
CD-ROM encyclopaedias
Internet access providers
multimedia systems
newsgroups, Internet
printers, choosing
Cots

Dairy desserts
Detergents, laundry
Drinks, summer
Duty-free prices in Australia

Education savings plans
Electronic organisers
Encyclopaedias, CD-ROM
Environmental labelling claims
Espresso machines

Fake tans
First aid kits
Food
dairy desserts
genetic engineering
'mad cow' disease
milk
probiotics, Yakult
salad bars
soy drink and cholesterol
summer drinks
yoghurt

Garden blower/vacs, electric
Genetic engineering in food
Guarantees, 'lifetime'

Health
beta-carotene
first aid kits
help hotlines
hospitals, surviving
insurance
National Heart Foundation 'tick'
surgery, new techniques
Heaters, gas, decorative-effect
Home, adding value
Home security
alarm systems
window locks
Home theatre

Immunisation
Index, four-year
Insurance
health
travel
Internet access providers
Investing \$10,000

Kettles, cordless
Knives, 8" cook's

Labelling, green
Ladders, step, step-extension
and multipurpose
Laundry detergents
Lawnmower, solar-powered
Lawn trimmers, petrol
Lawyers, choosing and using

'Mad cow' disease
Mail-order shopping
Milk
Mosquito zappers and coils
Multimedia computers

Newsgroups, Internet
Organisers, electronic
Painkillers, over-the-counter
Pay TV
Petrol lawn trimmers
Phone bills
Photographers, wedding
Plastics recycling
Pools, buying
Printers, choosing
Probiotics, Yakult

Questions about CHOICE
Recycling
plastics
tyres

Salad bars
Saving for education
Saws, circular
Scams, medical and diet
Self-tanners
Shopping from home
Snoring, gadgets for stopping
Soy drink and cholesterol
Sparkling wines and champagne
Steering locks, car
Suitcases, trolley
Suncscreens
Superannuation
basics of
personal
Budget changes
Supermarket
prices
satisfaction
Surgery, new techniques
Swimming pools, buying

Tans, fake
Telephone bills
Televisions
34 cm
68 cm
Term deposits
Toasters
Toothpaste
Travel insurance
Trolley suitcases
Trust funds
TV, pay
Tyres, recycling
Vacuum cleaners
Vacuums/blowers, garden, electric
Warranties, 'lifetime'
Wedding photos and videos
Window locks

Yakult
Yoghurt

Feb

Dec, Jan*

Feb

Apr

Jan

Sep, Nov*

Oct

Jun

Sep

Jul

Nov

Jan

Jun

Feb

Aug

Jan

Oct

May

Nov

May

Oct

Jul

Dec, Feb*

Nov

Jun

Nov

Apr

May, Jul*

Jan

Sep

Nov

Sep, Nov*

Apr

Jan

Mar

Feb



Just how advanced is the 'Advanced Photo System'? See page 36.